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## **THESIS**

**GERMANY'S OSTPOLITIK IN CRISIS: PRESIDENT  
PUTIN AND CHANCELLOR MERKEL AMID THE  
UKRAINE CRISIS**

by

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June 2015

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CHANCELLOR MERKEL AMID THE UKRAINE CRISIS**

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## ABSTRACT

The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 set off the worst crisis between Russia and the West since the 1980s. In the wake of this event, a reunified Germany has emerged as the key leader to engage Russia on behalf of the West. The Crimean episode shattered the 1975 Helsinki foundation for the peaceful inviolability of Europe's existing borders. The shock of the Russian intervention in Ukraine and the Crimean annexation destroyed the illusion of the German *Ostpolitik* since 1969 of perpetual *entente* with Moscow and challenged the European security order.

This study examines historic German-Russian relations and Germany's foreign policy, with an emphasis on Germany's Russia Policy and post-1990 *Ostpolitik*. The evolution of policy from "change through rapprochement" to "change through trade" forms a special focus. Caught between an interest-led *Realpolitik* and a value-based *Moralpolitik*, Germany has changed its Russian statecraft since the Crimean annexation. The thesis examines this German policy transformation and presents its implications for Germany's foreign policy amidst a growing German geopolitical power in Europe.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSCE	Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSU	Christian Social Union
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DGAP	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik</i> (German Council in Foreign Relations)
ECFR	European Council on Foreign Relations
EDC	European Defense Community
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EU	European Union
FDP	Free Democratic Party of Germany
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany)
FSB	<i>Federalnaja sluschba besopasnosti</i> [Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation]
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDR	German Democratic Republic (East Germany)
INF	Intermediate Nuclear Forces
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KAS	<i>Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung</i> [Konrad-Adenaur political foundation]
KGB	<i>Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti</i> [Committee for State Security]
MBFR	Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSDAP	<i>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</i> [National Socialist German Workers' Party]
NVA	<i>Nationale Volksarmee</i> [National People's Army]
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitations Talk
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands [Socialist Unity Party of

	Germany]
SPD	Socialist Party of Germany
SRBM	Short Range Ballistic Missile
SWP	<i>Stiftung Wissenschaft and Politik</i> (German Institute for International and Security Affairs)
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
USD	US Dollars
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The community of fate shared by Germany and Russia reemerged in 2014 as a leading question of global security. Peace and stability in Europe and the world rely on compliance of international law to enable cooperative relations with prosperous economies and the peaceful settling of conflict in whatever form. During the Cold War, the conclusion of the 1975 Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was a major step out of that conflict and laid the foundation for Europe's inviolability of existing borders in the post-1945 order of nation states. For a quarter of a century, from 1989 until the day before yesterday, the idea of a great power violently changing the borders of Europe as in an earlier eras, especially as in during the 1919–1939 era, seemed completely unthinkable to most, notwithstanding the peaceful end of a divided Germany, the quiet eclipse of Czechoslovakia, the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia, and the sunset of the USSR. Despite public acknowledgement (save for Central Europeans) of Russia's constant claim for its sphere of influence—the “near abroad”—the world seemed shocked and surprised in 2014, when Russia violated existing international law and, in a coup de main of irregular war, annexed Crimea, thus violently changing borders in Europe with a bravado that especially shocked a younger generation with no tangible memory of such events.

The reunited Germany of the Berlin Republic especially has embraced its role as the bridge state between East and West in its geographically central position. Beginning at the end of the 1960s with the advent of Willy Brandt's *détente* with the Soviet bloc, and especially in the second decade of the new century, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) has been a strong mediator between the West, the United States, and Russia. In this respect, especially in contemporary German political culture, statecraft and popular will manifests an understanding of Russian beliefs, behaviors, goals and self-interests, which have led to an international perception of Germany among its critics and skeptics as being a “Russian Firster,”<sup>1</sup> prioritizing Russian interests over NATO allies and

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<sup>1</sup>Pal Jonson, “The Debate about Article V and Its Credibility: What Is It All About?” (NATO Research Paper No. 58, May 2010), 5, <http://www.ndc.nato.int/research/series.php?icode=1>.

collective defense. In a 2015 interview with the German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, former chancellor Gerhard Schroeder (1998–2005) openly praised Otto von Bismarck as his example of statesmanship and guardian of a European order, a figure whose statecraft had famously swung from east to west, but which generally had anchored the fate of the Second Reich to Petersburg and the Romanov dynasty.<sup>2</sup>

While Schroeder's successor, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, does not have the same close relation to Russian President Vladimir Putin as her predecessor, in the midst of the Ukrainian crisis and even before, she had still used the avenues of dialogue with Russia and its political elite instead of such alternatives of power politics that recalled the Cold War, or something even worse. But having lost patience and with factual evidence at hand in the course of the Malaysian passenger jet being shot down over Ukraine in 2014, as well as with Putin's late personal statement in 2015 that the Crimea annexation was deliberately planned and executed on order in a manner that recalled too well the worst of modern European history, Chancellor Merkel had no choice but to rethink Germany's foreign policy towards Russia in the hard and brutal realities of crisis in the years 2014–2015. From the comfortable and morally pleasing role as mediator in East–West relations between the poles of Washington, London, Paris, and Moscow, the German chancellor, in the course of 2014–2015, has turned to a tougher stance with respect to Russia in order to ensure compliance with international law: the basis and precondition for twenty-first-century postmodern diplomacy. This study addresses the context and content of this shift in policy, which constitutes a diplomatic revolution for German foreign and security policy, which is not well understood in the United States or which all too often becomes the butt of caricature.

## **A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION**

The objective of this thesis is to answer the question of whether the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 has fundamentally altered the tenets of German foreign policy regarding the Russian-German partnership and the compromise between East and

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<sup>2</sup>Martin Doerry and Klaus Wiegrefe, "Wie man Frieden sichert: Spiegel-Gespräch mit Altkanzler Schroeder" [How to secure peace: Spiegel-interview with former Chancellor Schroeder], *Der Spiegel*, no. 14 (March 28, 2015), <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-132909486.html>.



West. In the second instance, if this crisis has ushered in such a fundamental change as some new epoch of conflict and its requirement for diplomacy, what are the root causes of diverging German-Russian relations since Germany's reunification in 1990? An additional focus seeks to explain the international perception of German Foreign Policy as being too Russian-friendly, despite Germany's strong ties and cultural foundations in the Euro-Atlantic hemisphere.

## **B. RELEVANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC**

With the fall of the inner German border and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union during 1989 to 1991, Germany suddenly went from being the sundered cockpit of the Cold War conflict to its central geographical position in Europe, as it had been before 1945. This position had lately resembled a bridge towards Central and Eastern European nations and Russia, in which all that transpired between the two was interpreted as friendship, amity, and prosperity. The episodes of conflict from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries gave the imperative for cooperation an added boost. Because of its geography and modern history, Germany has a long tradition of alternately friendly and hostile relations with Russia, respectively the Soviet Union, since 1918, if not since the time of Frederick the Great's Prussia. Since Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* in the late 1960s, West Germany has promoted cooperation over confrontation, aiming at *Wandel durch Annäherung*—that is, “change through rapprochement”—in its foreign policy towards Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union beginning with the nadir of the Berlin crisis in 1961, which moved Egon Bahr and Willy Brandt to revise Cold War statecraft of the formation of eastern and western blocs.<sup>3</sup> With German reunification in 1990, Berlin had to take on the role of a bridge or mediator between east and west, a fact that did not manifest itself fully until the geopolitical changes of the new century. In accordance with this role and in compliance with the 2+4 Treaty connected with unity, which finally freed the nation from the reserved rights of the victors of 1945, Germany has always attempted to maintain close contact in its negotiations with Russia. This statecraft that had been so

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<sup>3</sup>Sven Bernhard Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik: Eine Einführung* [Germany's foreign and security policy: An introduction], 2nd ed. (Opladen, Germany, and Farmington Hills, MI: Barbara Budrich, 2006), 57.

successful under Helmut Kohl in the late 1980s and 1990s continued with Gerhard Schroeder in 1998, but it took on a new quality that granted the latter's biography and the national interests of both nations that became manifest in ideological as well as trade ties in the Schroeder chancellorship. Since about 2013, in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis, such policy in the minds of critics has led to strong discussions between so-called *Russlandversteher*, or Russian apologists versus what is also a noteworthy rise of Russian and or Putin critics within German domestic politics.<sup>4</sup> The role of such figures in the domestic politics of Germany requires interpretation for a non-German-speaking readership, which this study aspires to do, along with the explanation of foreign policy making in Germany to a non-German readership that should become acquainted with this major issue of global security.

A sudden and recent unexpected change in Germany's foreign policy toward Russia, which supposedly happened in 2014, can be regarded as a diplomatic revolution for future policy-making decisions in Germany, as well as in Europe. As of spring 2015, this change has already worked its overall effects on foreign and security policy, and it may in time conceivably alter the balance of power in Europe and Eurasia, which is very much in flux. Not only is Russia a part of continental Europe, but it is also Germany's eleventh largest bilateral trade partner. According to the Federal Foreign Office, bilateral trade figures were declining by 6 percent in the first half of 2014, after having declined already by 5 percent in 2013; even more important is that "German exports to Russia fell by 16 percent in the first half of 2014,"<sup>5</sup> creating a complex problem for Germany's decision of how to engage with Russia, as German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier clearly stated: "Russia's actions on the Crimean Peninsula were a serious violation of international law and of the principles upon which European peace is based.

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<sup>4</sup>Andreas Rinke, "How Putin Lost Berlin: Moscow's Annexion of Crimea Changed Germany's Policies towards Russia," *Internationale Politik* 69, no. 3 (May 2014).  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1556286035?accountid=12702>.

<sup>5</sup>Federal Foreign Office, "Russian Federation," Foreign and European Policy, Federal Foreign Office, accessed December 2, 2014, [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/01-Nodes/RussischeFoederation\\_node.html](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/01-Nodes/RussischeFoederation_node.html).

That is why we cannot let pass or ignore what took place.”<sup>6</sup> With the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia changed European borders by both force of arms and an especially coercive diplomacy that radiated out well beyond the Black Sea and across new democracies that had formerly been an integral part of the USSR and its weary and wary neighbors in Central Europe. This earthquake-like event, felt beyond Kiev, Odessa, and the Donbass, compelled German politicians to reevaluate the political tenets that had grown familiar and comfortable for their generalized good feeling and absence of bullets. Is this the dawning of a new age in German-Russian relations that somehow resembles the unhappy memories of the prelude to 1914, or to 1941, or to 1961?

With the primacy of foreign policy over other fields in Germany, foreign policy is the major instrument to influence other states, in this context Russia.<sup>7</sup> Although sufficient literature is available on German and Russian foreign policy, this thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of Germany’s policies on Russia with respect to the foundations of interests and constitutional values based on a case study of the Russian annexation of Crimea. This thesis also aims to explain the extent of Germany’s “Russia Firsters,” or *Russlandversteher*, Russian apologists in Germany.

### C. HYPOTHESIS

During the quarter century since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a reunified Germany has gained ever more strength on an international scale while the U.S. role in Europe has shrunk to a shadow of its former self, and the other powers expect those who rule in Berlin to take over more political responsibility. Germany’s traditional *Ostpolitik*, with its cooperative foreign policy, has always aimed at maintaining good, cooperative relations with Russia, at first as a means to end the national division, and then as a means to assure the peaceful transformation of Russia into a European democracy with the

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<sup>6</sup>Frank-Walter Steinmeier, interview by Christiane Hoffmann, “German Foreign Minister: ‘Crimea Will Remain a Source of Conflict,’” *Spiegel Online International*, November 25, 2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/german-foreign-minister-steinmeier-on-russia-and-ukraine-a-1004891.html>.

<sup>7</sup>Lisette Andreae and Karl Kaiser, “The ‘Foreign Policies’ of Specialized Ministries,” in *Germany’s New Foreign Policy: Decision-Making in an Interdependent World*, ed. Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Karl Kaiser (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 46.

junking of imperial fantasies of the old stripe. Since 1990, Germany had also always been “an advocate for Russia in the European Union.”<sup>8</sup> After perceivably having overcome the dramatic Russian weakness in the wake of the breakup of the USSR (which was widely accepted, even by Russian politicians at the beginning of this century), Putin assumed office and, with regard to a general primacy of domestic politics over foreign politics in Russia, first exploited the opportunity for a *coup de main* in the Caucasus with war against Georgia in 2008 and then offered a second, greater chance to upend the post-1989 order. Putin used the ongoing and sharpening political crisis in Ukraine as his stage and illegitimately annexed Crimea with a small degree of violence—a rather bloodless *Anschluss* with concealed conflict on the old Soviet model.<sup>9</sup> Initial international reactions of shock and calls for a wholly force-free, political solution during the crisis have not led to a satisfactory result as of spring 2015, once Russia had finally integrated the territory into its administration and regarded the Crimea as part of sovereign Russian territory. Claudia Major and Jana Puglierin have stated that “the Ukraine crisis has substantially and perhaps permanently altered Europe’s security structure. Europe is now much less secure, and its security architecture altogether less stable, more confrontational, and less predictable.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, the tenets of German foreign and security policy, so long celebrated for half a century, have endured a horrible blow, and the effects and character of this event demand close scrutiny.

The hypothesis of this study suggests that German foreign policy, closely connected to the institution and personality of German Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and especially to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, changed fundamentally in the course of the Ukraine crisis during 2014–2015. On the basis of

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<sup>8</sup>Stefan Meister, “Reframing Germany’s Russia Policy: An Opportunity for the EU,” Policy brief, European Council on Foreign Relations, April 24, 2014, 1, [http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/reframing\\_germanys\\_russia\\_policy\\_an\\_opportunity\\_for\\_the\\_eu306#sthash.1Q5lu4uz.dpuf](http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/reframing_germanys_russia_policy_an_opportunity_for_the_eu306#sthash.1Q5lu4uz.dpuf).

<sup>9</sup>Michael McFaul, “Domestic Politics of NATO Expansion in Russia: Implications for American Foreign Policy,” policy memo no. 5, PONARS, October 1997, 1–2, <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/domestic-politics-nato-expansion-russia-implications-american-foreign-policy-michael-mcfaul>.

<sup>10</sup>Claudia Major and Jana Puglierin, “Europe’s New (In)Security Order: The Ukraine Conflict Has Changed the European Security Architecture,” *IP Journal*, German Council on Foreign relations, November 25, 2014, <https://ip-journal.dgap.org/en/ip-journal/topics/europes-new-insecurity-order-0>.

historic German-Russian relations from the nineteenth century onwards, this thesis furthermore hypothesizes that root causes for this rupture include, among other causes, a combination of the West's underestimation of the influence of the *siloviki*—the leading people with military, police or intelligence backgrounds—within Putin's closest advisors in the Kremlin. Of further significance is the shared German Democratic Republic (GDR) past of the 1970s and 1980s in the respective backgrounds of acting personalities such as Angela Merkel and Vladimir Putin. Additionally, such elites' misinterpretations of the Russian insistence of its spheres of influence, the “near abroad,” and the respective forces of domestic pressures in the statecraft and external relations of Russia and in Germany are of significant relevance. Whether as a legacy of the former GDR or out of a reflexive and historical anti-Americanism and neo-Bismarckian orientation, the strong presence of Russian apologists in German politics and society adds to the complexity of the foreign policy change and influences its durability, especially in this moment of crisis.

#### **D. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

At the core of the research design is the evaluation of historic literature on German-Russian relations, as well as the analysis of the Ukraine crisis as a single case study to determine changing German foreign policy. In regards to the wealth of literature dealing with Germany, its history and foreign policy—qualitatively as well as quantitatively—a selection of German and English sources are used. Due to the current nature of events in Ukraine, the research primarily draws on secondary sources, including scholarly articles, political commentary, and think-tank reports, such as the German Council in Foreign Relations (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik* [DGAP]), the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (*Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik* [SWP]), or the European Council on Foreign Affairs, as well as monographs and books dealing with German and Russian relations and their respective foreign policies. In addition, primary sources are used to take into consideration the perspectives of German and Russian top politicians, analyzing, for example, speeches by the German chancellor or by the Russian president. The events, which peaked in the annexation of Crimea, are briefly recapitulated in chronological order to explain the conflict and the initial efforts undertaken in light of German foreign policy and put in the context of historical German-

Russian relations. The historical perspective of German-Russian relations is required to show the fundamental changes that have taken place in Germany's foreign policy towards Russia, which adds to the value of this thesis.

## **E. THESIS OVERVIEW**

The master thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter I discussed the relevance and current significance of the topic, the hypothesis for the research, and its methodology and research design. The Chapter II provides background on the development of the German-Russian relations since the seventeenth century, taking into account the principles of German *Ostpolitik*, the Soviet-Union's role in the reunification, and the current state of affairs. Chapter III focuses on the formation of German Foreign Policy, explaining the structure of the federal German government and considering the role of civil society in foreign affairs before ending with a discussion of Germany's Russia policy. Chapter IV focuses on the case study, initially discussing the formation of current Russian foreign policy and its parameters, as well as its interdependence with domestic Russian politics and the current dominance of the *siloviki* in the Kremlin. In a second part, Chapter IV discusses the evolution of events that peaked with the annexation of Crimea and subsequent German and international reactions. Chapter IV ends with an evaluation of whether Putin's decisions pay off. Chapter V contains the analysis of a German foreign policy change and its root causes, determining its extent and evaluating whether the wider-spread understanding of "Russia Firsters" has declined. Chapter V ends with a discussion of the consequences of such a policy change for German security and foreign policy. Chapter VI summarizes findings, identifies implications for Germany's foreign and Russia policies, and provides recommendations for future research.

## II. HISTORY OF GERMAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

Germany and Russia share a longstanding and ambivalent common history—from the Battle at Lake Peipus in 1242, where Alexander Nevsky defeated the Knights of the German Order, to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and beyond—and have experienced the full spectrum of conflict and cooperation over the past centuries. The mutual influence on the development of both nations has had significant relevance. This story forms the basis of any understanding of contemporary German-Russian relations. Walter Laquer underlines these close relations, saying, “Culturally, the two nations were for many years nearer to each other than to any other country.”<sup>11</sup> These ambivalent relations depended on such leading personalities as Peter the Great, Tsar Nicholas II and his cousin William II, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, Mikhail Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl, and, within the last fifteen years, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder (who was succeeded in 2005 by Chancellor Angela Merkel) and President Vladimir Putin. The dualism of these contemporary figures fits into a pattern of personality and statecraft that has mesmerized Europe for centuries and been the pivot of war and peace.

This chapter focuses on the history of German-Russian relations more or less from the seventeenth century until today in four parts, laying the historic background to comprehend contentious German-Russian statecraft, which scholars like Angela Stent characterize as “comrades in misfortune”<sup>12</sup> or as historian Walter Laquer suggests is a “love and hate relationship unique perhaps in history . . . [as] every now and then . . . Germany has been branded as the enemy *par excellence*.”<sup>13</sup> After providing historic origins of German-Russian diplomacy until the end of World War II, this chapter depicts the emergence of *détente* under Willy Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* during the Cold War, before the discussion of the Soviet influence on Germany’s reunification. Chapter II ends with Russia’s rebirth and a retrospective on the twenty-five years since German reunification,

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<sup>11</sup>Walter Laquer, *Russia and Germany: A Century of Conflict* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 317.

<sup>12</sup>Angela Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse, and the New Europe*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3.

<sup>13</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 25.

contributing specific attention to the personal relations of Russia's and Germany's leaders until today.

#### **A. GERMAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS BEFORE 1945**

The story begins recently, that is, more recently in modern history than most ancient accounts of the Teuton and the Slav suggest, especially when one wishes to underscore the closeness of the German-Russian relationship. Although German-Russian history dates back as far as 1242, when Alexander Nevsky defeated the Teutonic knights of the Bishop of Tartu, Herman I, in Estonia, it was actually Peter the Great (1672–1725) who invited Germans at large to assist in developing Russia—politically and economically—because Romanov elites perceived the West, especially Germany, as scientifically advanced.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Peter the Great adapted Russia according to the absolutist dynastic regimes in Europe and reacted to the developments in military affairs of the standing army and the post-1648 absolutist order by reforms from above, which built the foundations of Russia's later status as a member of the five leading powers in the era of the wars of the cabinets. The first Russian universities built in St. Petersburg and Moscow were modeled after German examples, thus exhibiting Germany's increasing influence on education, science, trade, craftsmanship, and even philosophy, military affairs, and state administration to such an extent where “about one-third of high government officials were of German origin at a time when Germans formed about 1 percent of Russia's population.”<sup>15</sup> Despite a perpetual flow of 500,000 German immigrants to Russia in the nineteenth century,<sup>16</sup> Angela Stent emphasizes that Germans formed only a small percentage of the population in Russia before the revolution in 1917, but that they influenced Russia to a larger extent than Russians influenced them.<sup>17</sup> In this respect, Germans formed the niche administrative elite in the dual societies, especially of

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<sup>14</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 4; Boris Chasanov, “Der russische Traum von Deutschland” [The Russian dream of Germany], in *Russland: Kontinuität, Konflikt und Wandel* [Russia: Continuity, Conflict and Change], eds. Reinhard C. Meier-Walser and Bernd Rill (Munich, Germany: Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung e.V.; ATWERB-Verlag, 2002), 34–35.

<sup>15</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 4.

<sup>16</sup>Chasanov, “Russische Traum von Deutschland,” [The Russian dream of Germany], 35.

<sup>17</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 4.



Eastern Europe, which were later doomed to disintegrate in the stresses and strains of the nineteenth century with the advent of mass politics.

As Napoleon reached the height of his power in 1812, the Prussian General Yorck von Wartenburg, although aligned with France in the war against Russia, signed the Tauroggen convention against his king's initial will and declared neutrality in order to free Prussia from French occupation. Hence, Tauroggen signifies the modern tradition of Prussian-Russian cooperation. Laquer points out that such cooperation led to a "direct line to Bismarck's coalition with Russia."<sup>18</sup> When the Congress of Vienna defined Europe's eastern border at the Ural in 1815, it meant that a significant portion of Russia belonged to continental Europe: Russia was one of the five Great Powers<sup>19</sup> that determined Europe's future in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The holy alliance that grew out of Metternich's diplomacy cemented the northern courts, especially in the maelstrom of 1848, only to witness the breakdown of this bond in 1852 with the war in Crimea when Austria and Prussia did not stand with the Tsar against the French and the British.

After 1871, German chancellor Otto von Bismarck was convinced that another war in Europe would not be to Germany's benefit and focused his foreign policy on the preservation of the status quo of three great powers aligned with each other out of the five powers: a strong Germany with an isolated France. In 1873, Germany and Russia became part of the *Dreikaiserabkommen*, and a revival of the northern courts pact. The Three Emperor's League consisted of Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary, was renewed in 1883, and was succeeded by Bismarck's Reinsurance Treaty with Russia in 1887.<sup>20</sup> The German decision in the Wilhelmine era not to renew the Reinsurance Treaty after Bismarck's dismissal had significant consequences for Russia, which then opted for closer ties with France and subsequently concluded the Franco-Russian alliance in 1894. Despite the alliance with the French and its path to the emergence of opposing alliance

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<sup>18</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 26.

<sup>19</sup>The European Great Powers included Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Russia.

<sup>20</sup>Gregor Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815 bis 1945* [German foreign policy: From 1815 to 1945] (Munich, Germany: C.H. Beck, 2013), 42, 47–58.

blocs in World War I, Russia did not want to risk relations with Germany, especially because Germany after 1871 had become Russia's most important trading partner.<sup>21</sup> Present-day trade between Germany and Russia has its roots in the nineteenth century, when from 1858 to 1913 German imports to Russia rose from 28 percent of all Russian imports to 47 percent, while Russian exports to Germany, mainly natural resources, rose from 16 percent of all Russian exports to 29 percent.<sup>22</sup>

In the decade prior to the outbreak of the 1914 war, the devastating Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 had severe implications for Russia as it finally ignited the revolution in St. Petersburg. The war drove Russian aspirations back to Europe from expansion in Asia, back to the Balkans, and back into greater conflict with the powers with whom it had been allied in the past. The revolution called for a constitutional government with legislation and citizens' equal rights before the law, a revolution against the Old Regime. Martin Malia compares the Russian 1905 revolution to Germany's revolution of 1848, where in both cases "the outcome was what was called a *Scheinkonstitutionalismus*, a pseudo-constitutionalism, in which the monarchy granted a legislative parliament but did not accept that the government be responsible to it."<sup>23</sup> Consequently, the members of the Duma were virtually responsible for the state of the country, but they had no controlling and constitutional power of checks and balances, which created an incomplete political structure incapable of survival in the rigors that awaited them domestically and internationally.

While German-Russian trade relations prospered, rising imperialism and the developments in the Balkans of perpetual war and conflict between Ottoman, Habsburg, and Romanov led to enhanced anti-German attitudes in Russia and, by 1910, to the view in both Germany and Russia that war between them was unavoidable.<sup>24</sup> Still, after the Balkan crisis of 1912–1913, when William II made his loyalty to Austria-Hungary

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<sup>21</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 68; Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 5.

<sup>22</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 6; Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 143.

<sup>23</sup>Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 68–69.

<sup>24</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 61.

evident, the German Emperor was reluctant to go to war with Russia, and thus with his cousin, over the Balkans which many in the Berlin government felt was unworthy of national sacrifice, especially because Habsburg sought a more assertive policy there at the expense of Russian interests. In Russia, the results of the Balkan crisis of 1913 were regarded as further defeat—after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 and the Bosnian annexation crisis in 1908—and the German military mission to Constantinople led by Lieutenant General Liman von Sanders in June 1913 worsened the German-Russian relations even more as Wilhelmine Germany extended its reach possibly to the Persian Gulf and to spheres of influence of the other imperial powers.<sup>25</sup> Russia became convinced that it was necessary to stand up in order to retain its status as a Great Power in the shifting powers of 1913–1914. The July crisis of 1914, after the assassination of Austrian-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, quickly paved the way for the general war that eventually became known as World War I, when Germany gave Austria-Hungary the *carte blanche* against Serbia, which inevitably meant the involvement of Russia. The German leader had become fatalistic and pessimistic about the rise of Russian power in the European system and opted for earlier war to preclude being suffocated by the Russians later on. Although the Germans tried to convince Russia not to mobilize in order to prevent a European war, the Russian order for mobilization could not be reversed, and subsequently, Germany declared war on Russia on August 1, 1914.<sup>26</sup> The German war plan has foreseen the two front problem to require first a swift blow against France, and then the eventual confrontation with the Russians. This plan was overtaken by events. The Germans were soon faced with an unexpected advance by the Russian Army into East Prussia and Galicia, but the victories of Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff at Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes in August and September 1914 enabled the German Army to occupy large parts of the Baltic and Poland by 1917, as well as the wield destruction on the Serbs and secure strategic goals in the East, despite the damage that the Russians did to Habsburg in what is modern-day Ukraine.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 111.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 126–27.

After having finally inflicting defeat after defeat on the Russians during the three years in what Erich von Ludendorff defined as total war, causing three million Russian casualties, the February Revolution of 1917—aided by the German secret military intelligence organization—led to the formation of a provisional government in Russia and the abdication of Nicholas II, thus ending the Romanov Old Regime.<sup>28</sup>

Due to the influence of German experts in supporting the state and administration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, by the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, most areas of Russian domestic politics or foreign policy were in part shaped by Germans.<sup>29</sup> It was German assistance that enabled the return of Lenin to Russia, via Finland, following his exile in Switzerland in April 1917. In 1914–1918, the combatant powers used indirect and concealed means to wage war against each other with gusto. In coordination with the German *Auswärtige Amt* (Foreign Office), the objective was to strengthen the Russian revolution in order to set up a new provisional government after the February revolution, which would negotiate a truce and peace deal, as well as enter into new German-Russian diplomatic relations.<sup>30</sup> It was the consequence of Russia's defeat in World War I, which “disorganized Russia's still immature political structures to the point where the Bolshevik Party . . . was able to seize power in the ‘October coup’ of 1917.”<sup>31</sup>

Under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, the Bolsheviks formed a new government, which made a truce and engaged in negotiations with the Central Powers, leading to the conclusion of the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918. Brest-Litovsk has been perceived as the “first milestone in Soviet-German relations after the revolution,”<sup>32</sup> but the treaty came at a disastrous cost for Russia as the Germans claimed a third of Russia's population, half of its industry, and up to 90 percent of the coal-mining industry. The Russians were defenseless and saw the treaty with the Germans as one

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<sup>28</sup>Malia, *Soviet Tragedy*, 90.

<sup>29</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 6.

<sup>30</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 127.

<sup>31</sup>Malia, *Soviet Tragedy*, 82.

<sup>32</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 138.

without alternative.<sup>33</sup> The amendment to the treaty, signed in August 1918, supported the Bolsheviks' claim to power among domestic turmoil in Russia, of which the Germans were fully aware when they tried to secure sufficient reparations.<sup>34</sup> Germany indirectly set the stage for the rise of the Soviet Union, which would dominate German-Russian relations for decades to come. With the abdication of William II and the signing of the armistice in November 1918, the German Empire ceased to exist.

Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919, as part of the Paris suburban pacts with the Central Powers, that is, the treaties with Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey. The Treaty of Versailles became a symbol of humiliation, injustice, and loss for those Germans unwilling to accept defeat in their numbers. The new European order was laden with smoldering conflicts in the East, which made the German-Russian relationship all the more fateful in the years 1919–1939. Although the renewed independence of Poland separated Russia and Germany, they were tied together by the fact that the Parisian victors excluded the defeated Central Powers and Red Russia from having a say in the fate of Europe and beyond. As a result, both nations were eager to revise the terms of the Versailles Treaty and the Paris system of 1919.<sup>35</sup> Despite the fact that the new Weimar government was highly anti-communist, the force of power politics drove Berlin and Moscow together once more, as part of the revival of *Ostpolitik* à la Bismarck was put in hand by the young German democracy, specially by its anti-democratic military leadership in the *Reichswehr*. At the international conference in Genoa, Italy, in 1922, the Russians and Germans were allowed only a passive role and engaged in bilateral negotiations that ended in the surprise of the German-Russian Treaty of Rapallo, which was directed against the western victors. The international community in London, Paris, and Washington, DC, was shocked by the prospects of German-Russian rapprochement. Although the significance of the treaty has been exaggerated, the pact—which included the reciprocal waiving of reparations, re-establishing diplomatic ties, and

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<sup>33</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 128–29.

<sup>34</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 130.

<sup>35</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 140.

expanding trade relations—became a symbol of renewed Russian-German relations, although it was not an alliance.<sup>36</sup>

The Berlin Treaty of 1926 supplemented the Rapallo Treaty, was more specific, and declared mutual neutrality in case of a third party's aggression toward either Russia or Germany.<sup>37</sup> In Stent's assessment, the treaties of Rapallo and Berlin, used as symbols of cooperation, did not have such an exaggerated significance, but rather shaped the attitudes of Germany's and Russia's neighbors in the Little *Entente* in Paris, Warsaw, Prague, and Belgrade, which feared too close a relationship between the two nations.<sup>38</sup>

Equally significant was the secret military cooperation initiated and organized with the Soviets by the leadership of the *Reichswehr*, especially by its chief of staff, Hans von Seeckt, whose open eastern orientation was no secret and probably at variance with parliamentary control of military policy, as well as foreign policy. This secret military cooperation support began in 1922 and was beneficial to both nations and armies. While the German Army set up trainings camp for weapon systems (aircraft and tanks) that were forbidden under the Versailles Treaty in Germany, the Russians gained access to modern military equipment from Germany; thus, ironically, the Soviets enabled the creation of the modern armor branch *Panzerwaffe*, which would attack Russia in a *Blitzkrieg* only six years after the end of the bilateral military collaboration of 1933.<sup>39</sup> The leadership of the German army, impressed by the people's army of the Red Army, developed a pro-Soviet wing, which became a model for a new national army mobilized by an aggressive, totalitarian ideology. Werner von Blomberg, in particular, was but one of leading *Reichswehr* officers blinded by the red star, which made him susceptible to the Nazis when their time came in the 1930s.

In the later 1920s, the Russian-German trade relations prospered as the political bilateral relations cooled down due to the fact that Russian and German politicians lost their interests because the political situation in Europe had changed with the arrival of

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 140–41; Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 148–49.

<sup>37</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 142.

<sup>38</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 7.

<sup>39</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 150.

normalcy and *détente* with the western powers, symbolized by Locarno and Gustav Stresemann's effort to lessen the diplomatic wreckage of the war.<sup>40</sup> This period of stabilization was preceded by great uproar as the immediate post-war period came to a close. By 1923, the Weimarer Republic was struggling to avoid economic collapse in the aftermath of the *Ruhrkrise*, where French and Belgian forces occupied the West German Ruhr area, and to re-stabilize domestic politics. The diverging interests of the wide spectrum of parties in Germany, from the Communists to the Social Democrats, the Centrum Party to the rising Nazi Party, led to multiple chancellors during the 1920s and an interlude of stability followed by renewed chaos after 1929. The failed coup in Munich 1923 provided Adolf Hitler with broad attention, and after his short time in jail, Hitler refounded the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP).<sup>41</sup> The Russian influence in the NSDAP was significant, in that Baltic Germans who had fled the Bolsheviks came to Munich and exerted an early influence on Hitler and his upper-Bavarian comrades with the extremism that had been native to the Red Terror. Baltic Germans also imported the vicious anti-Jewish ideas of Imperial Russia into the NSDAP, which sought an end to assimilation and tolerance for Jews that had been obtained in the second Reich.

In the fight among the branches of the left wing, the Soviets under Stalin encouraged the Communist Party in the late 1920s to ally with the Nazi Party to counter the Social Democrats, which Stalin wrongly saw as his main opposition to successful world revolution of the working class.<sup>42</sup> With Hitler's seizure of power on January 30, 1933, it was expected that the German-Russian relations would deteriorate, but there was no initial break on either side because both nations were preoccupied with their domestic situations.<sup>43</sup> However, in the course of 1934, Hitler's *Gleichschaltung*, persecution of Jews and suppression of other minorities, as well as members of the opposition, including the ban on communists in Germany, led to Moscow's reexamination of Germany and its

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<sup>40</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 146.

<sup>41</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 174.

<sup>42</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 5.

<sup>43</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 172–3.

imminent risks to Soviet Russia.<sup>44</sup> Soviet Russia was hardly able to react because Russia's population had declined between 19 and 20 million people between the late 1920s and 1939 due to collectivization and the extermination of the Kulaks, especially in 1931 in Ukraine, and with Stalin's purges within the party and society that began in 1934.<sup>45</sup> In addition, the USSR was technologically backward compared to Germany, and its rearmament program only began in earnest in the mid-1930s, employing many of the weapons and tactics that had been perfected in common labor in the training areas and weapons forges maintained jointly by the two nations in the Weimar era.

With Nazi Germany's rhetoric becoming more and more aggressive with the anti-Comintern campaign and the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and its racial ideology, including the objective for *Lebensraum im Osten*—expanding living space in the East—Stalin became nervous and distrustful but tried to avoid further escalation in German-Soviet relations. Economic trade decreased significantly to only 0.6% of overall German foreign trade after 1933 reflected exactly the increasing tensions on all levels of German-Soviet relations up to 1939.<sup>46</sup> By 1938, Stalin was engaged in half-hearted negotiations with the British and French, but the proposed alliance failed in the course of the summer of the next year. Thus, in a diplomatic revolution with echoes of Tauroggen and Rapallo, Berlin and Moscow signed a non-aggression pact, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939, instantly improving trade relations, especially because Germany needed raw materials in order to support its heavy industry for war preparations that had been underway since 1936.<sup>47</sup> The pact with Soviet Russia liberated Germany from the threat of a two-front war against France and Russia and enhanced its war fighting capabilities. Subsequently, Germany attacked Poland on September 1, 1939. After concluding a truce with Japan on August 15, 1939, the Russians attacked Poland from the east on August 17, 1939. Germany and the Soviet Union split Poland after its capitulation only weeks after the war had begun and consequently shared a common border.

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 178+221.

<sup>45</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 213; Malia, *Soviet Tragedy*, 263.

<sup>46</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 185.

<sup>47</sup>Malia, *Soviet Tragedy*, 282; Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 8.



While Stalin fought the winter war against Finland in 1939, Hitler attacked Denmark and Norway in spring 1940 in order to sustain the flow of resources the Third Reich needed for the war economy and for the attack in the West against the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France, which took place May 10, 1940.<sup>48</sup> In December 1940, in an effort to collapse the British Empire, Hitler entreated Foreign Minister Molotov to make common cause in a German-Italian-Russian and Japanese offensive in Eurasia, to which Molotov demurred because of the neutrality of the Japanese in Asia in the wake of the 1938–1939 Soviet Japanese war. This refusal to participate fully in Axis world strategy opened the door to a revision of statecraft, and the German side decided on an offensive against the Soviet Union, which, they believed, was hopelessly weakened by ideology and inner contradictions, not the least being the gutting of the brains of the Red Army through the purges.

Finally, Hitler attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, which came as a shock to Stalin, despite Stalin's own assessment that a war between Germany and the Soviet Union rather sooner than later was inevitable.<sup>49</sup> Stalin has assumed that he would have to fight all the capitalist powers in a later war, a task that would be made easier once the capitalist powers had weakened themselves in the present war. After operational successes during the first months of war against the Soviet Union, the Germans advanced deep into Russia and came to a halt only short of Moscow. The offensive began again in 1942; however, it reached a tipping point in Stalingrad, which in early 1943 marked the most serious reversal of German fortune at arms with the loss of Field Marshal von Paulus' 6th army. The German and Axis allies waged war without quarter in the USSR in 1941–1942, with the ideal of the *Generalplan Ost* drafted by the SS, which foresaw the extermination of Slavic and Jewish populations in European Russia to make way for a Eurasian continental German empire on an unprecedented scale.

Stalin's propaganda reinforced a brutal image of the Germans, which, together with more than 27 million Soviets killed, left a lasting image in the mind of the Soviet people: the bad German, an image that would later be transferred onto only West

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<sup>48</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 225.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 230–235.

Germans as heirs of the Third Reich made more dangerous by an imperialist United States; on the other hand, Germans in East and West did not forget the brutal occupation of Soviet Forces in 1945, the ethnic cleansing of ethnic Germans in Poland and Czechoslovakia, or the property seizures in East Germany. All of these events influenced German-Russian relations throughout the decades of the Cold War and beyond with a monumental burden.<sup>50</sup> After the allies had advanced into Germany, Hitler had committed suicide, and the Russians had taken Berlin, the new government under *Großadmiral* Karl Doenitz signed an unconditional surrender on May 8, 1945. This left the Soviet Union and the other allies as victors, as the Third Reich ceased to exist in the division of Germany among the victors as a prelude to the Cold War.

From the Convention of Tauroggen to the Reinsurance Treaty, to the Treaty of Rapallo, to von Seeckt's secret German-Soviet military collaboration, to the Hitler-Stalin-Pact of August 1939, and finally to the third Reich's capitulation on May 8, 1945, there have always been times of cooperation and confrontation in historic German-Russian relations until the end of World War II, which did not affect only Germany and Russia, but Europe as a whole.

## **B. THE COLD WAR AND EMERGENCE OF A NEW *OSTPOLITIK***

The Cold War system of German-Russian relations emerged from the failures among the victors to end the war with a durable European order of peace and security, as in 1815 or even 1871. Rather, the peace of Europe lay in its division, which meant the division of Germany and Austria, as well as parts of Yugoslavia. This regime began to transform in the early 1960s and ended at the close of the 1980s, after the long sacrifice of the Cold War in which the common fate of Germany and Russia was always a leading theme.

The Allies took control of a fully occupied Germany on June 5, 1945, established a provisional government, and set up four occupational zones: a British, American, Soviet, and also, as agreed in Yalta, a French zone.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, the former German

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<sup>50</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 9.

<sup>51</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 252.

capital Berlin was divided into four sectors. Coordination among the allies was supposed to be in the Allied Control Council by achieving consensus, which proved to be a challenging task because “the Four Powers not only had very different goals with regard to Germany but no long-term strategy either.”<sup>52</sup> The Soviets had gained vast territories during and before World War II beyond their initial borders, such as the Baltic States, and were occupying complete Eastern Europe, which, among other things, led the Soviet Union in 1945 to be one of the two global superpowers thereafter. By that and by Poland’s west border shared with the Soviet occupation zone in East Germany, Germany lost its territories east of the Oder-Neisse-line. The main objective for Stalin was to prevent any future German aggression, as the Soviets feared neo-Nazi German revanchism for the territories lost and were obsessed with the need to ensure buffer states between Germany and the Soviet Union.<sup>53</sup> The delay in Polish free elections, as stated in the Yalta, and the manipulated results in early 1947 elections—enabling a communist government—aroused suspicions among Western allies; and in the context of the progression of communist-modeled governments in Eastern and Central Europe, the East-West conflict escalated with the Western Allies prioritizing a democratic government in West Germany.<sup>54</sup>

When Stalin realized that he had failed to reach the objective of a neutral and communist Germany, he insisted on its division. In the West, it was perceived highly unlikely that the Soviet Union would have agreed to any other status of Germany, where the Soviets would not have control or economic access to parts of it, like the Soviets did when the decision was made in 1947 to govern the Soviet occupational zone separately from the West.<sup>55</sup> In the midst of working on the German question, the Cold War erupted in Greece and elsewhere over the Truman-Doctrine and Andrei Zhdanov’s subsequent

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<sup>52</sup>Helga Haftendorn, *Coming of Age: German Foreign Policy since 1945* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers), 9.

<sup>53</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 10.

<sup>54</sup>Malia, *Soviet Tragedy*, 297; Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 11; Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 252.

<sup>55</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 11; Malia, *Soviet Tragedy*, 299.

answer: dividing the world into the “free world and the totalitarian camp,”<sup>56</sup> respectively, or “the imperialists and anti-imperialists.”<sup>57</sup> With the confrontational divisions arising among the former allies, it was clear for Stalin that the most important problem to be solved was the German question, as the Soviets wanted to prevent a democratic West Germany from adopting an Atlantic orientation.<sup>58</sup> When George C. Marshall proposed the Marshall plan in June 1947 for economic aid to the Soviets and Eastern European nations, Stalin feared a pro-western attitude within the Soviet satellite states and rejected the offer. For Western Europe, the Marshall Plan’s objective was to stabilize the social and economic situation on the capitalist or social market economy model and thereby support reconstruction in order to avoid vulnerability to communist ideas.<sup>59</sup> With the Berlin Blockade from June 1948 to May 1949, Stalin’s objective was to destroy the Allies cohesion and to continue negotiating the German question and thus prevent a West Germany. The plan failed completely and achieved nearly the opposite because (a) Germans in West Germany and West Berlin united to outlive the crisis, West German’s public opinion of the Soviet Union plunged, and attitudes towards the United States soared with the airlift; (b) the Allies and Germany grew closer because the Germans were grateful for the *Rosinenbomber*, which positively influenced public opinion for a long time; (c) it became obvious that hopes for a united Germany had no prospects of success; and, therefore, d) it accelerated the creation of and determination for a West Germany.<sup>60</sup>

With the parliamentary council’s<sup>61</sup> acceptance of the Basic Law—the German *Grundgesetz*—the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was proclaimed on May 23, 1949, although not as a complete sovereign state.<sup>62</sup> The Allies retained control of Germany’s jurisprudence as “occupational law took precedence over German law,”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 11.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup>Malia, *Soviet Tragedy*, 299.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>60</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 12–13.

<sup>61</sup>The parliamentary council was built from representatives from the eleven West German states.

<sup>62</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 14–15.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

which was only partially eased by the Petersberg Agreement (Bad Godesberg) in November 1949, while full sovereignty would not be achieved until the 2+4 Treaty in 1990. In August 1949, Konrad Adenauer of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) became the first chancellor of West Germany, who concentrated his ambitions on *Westbindung* rather than *Ostpolitik*; he was determined to achieve Germany's integration into the West because he believed that the Western Allies would grant Germany more freedom to act on domestic and foreign policy only if the Germans could convince the Allies of the wish and will to integrate with the West.<sup>64</sup> Adenauer's idea of statecraft arose from his own Rhenish biography within Prussia of the Weimar Era, and from his dislike of the policy of swinging from west to east (Rapallo versus Locarno) that had so ill served the first German republic. Moreover, the center of gravity of German socialism lay in Saxony, now in Soviet control, and the Socialist Party of Germany (SPD) pushed for neutrality and unification, a policy at odds with the United States, UK, and French powers on whom Adenauer relied for the fortune of the FRG.

Due to the fact that Stalin could not reach his objective of a united but neutral Germany, where the Soviets could exercise some codetermination, the founding of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) on October 7, 1949, was perceived as the Soviet answer to the new FRG.<sup>65</sup> When the two German states were founded in 1949, the major Soviet goal was to exercise control over the GDR and establish a viable government.

The Marshall plan was not enough, however, and the West German state had to assure its security with the aid of what presently became its Atlantic allies. A security pact was essential, a requirement made all the more urgent by the worsening of the Cold War in the years 1949–1950. In the context of the global situation and perceived advance of communist influence, the Western Allies signed the Washington Treaty on April 4, 1949, founding the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In the words allegedly ascribed to the first NATO Secretary General, Lord “Pug” Ismay, NATO was founded

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<sup>64</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 12; Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 17.

<sup>65</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1815*, 253.

“to keep the Americans in, the Russians out, and the Germans down,”<sup>66</sup> in order to deter Soviet expansionism, prevent the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong North American presence on the continent, and encourage Western European political integration.

The Soviet eventual answer to NATO was the conclusion of the Warsaw Pact on May 14, 1955, uniting the eight Soviet satellite states under the umbrella of mutual cooperation and defense, where the GDR became a full member.<sup>67</sup> Both nuclear armed organization dominated the East-West conflict until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union, and resembled the respective pillar of deterrence and power projection in Europe. The first Soviet nuclear detonation in August 1949 reassured the Allies in their formation of NATO, while it also underlined the new superpower status of the Soviet Union. The bloc formation, including the foundation of the Warsaw Pact in 1955, determined the two opposing sides of the Cold War, which for the Germans meant the inevitable risk of a German brother war, putting Germany in the center of a potential battlefield. The Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe used the perceived West German danger as pretext for its legitimization and as *raison d’etre* for the Warsaw Pact.<sup>68</sup> However, the relevance of West Germany for the Soviets should not be underestimated, as for 40 years Soviet security would be challenged by West Germany for two main reasons: the FRG was the United States’ key NATO ally, and due to its geographical location was perceived central to NATO’s effectiveness during the Cold War; and the FRG was the only country sincerely interested in closer relations with an Eastern European state—the GDR.<sup>69</sup>

When NATO was founded in 1949, the Allies, especially the British and the Americans, had previously held their forces in Germany in fulfilment of their occupation duties and were incapable of significant military operations on the scale of 1944 or 1945,

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<sup>66</sup>David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance’s New Roles in International Security* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1998), x.

<sup>67</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 36.

<sup>68</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 10.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

so only smaller contingents remained in the FRG, while at the same time the Soviets had over thirty divisions deployed to East Germany.<sup>70</sup> This uneven military threat led Adenauer to worry about Germany's position, hoping to avoid a fate like Korea, where communist North Korean forces overran South Korea after crossing the 38th parallel in June 1950, thus initiating the Korean War with international involvement under U.S. leadership. After strong initial opposition by European neighbors, especially France, to Germany's rearmament, a solution was reached to create a European army, the so-called European Defense Community (EDC), which was the ideal of western defense along with NATO until 1954, when the French abandoned the idea. Instead, NATO allowed West Germany to establish its own new force in 1956, called the *Bundeswehr* (the federal armed forces), to attain full control of its forces. It was led by a defense minister and fully integrated within NATO and the mechanism of the Western European Union as the heir to the failed European Army.<sup>71</sup> West Germany's armament and admission to NATO by the Paris Treaties was paralleled by the revision of the General Treaty with the Allies, which, despite a few limitations, gave the Germans much of their national sovereignty back from the most severe regime of occupation.<sup>72</sup> Thus, exactly ten years after the end of World War II, the occupation ended and West Germany became a full member of the Western Alliance, founding the new federal armed forces (the *Bundeswehr*) to counter the threat from the East.

In the period from 1952 until 1955, especially with the death of Stalin, the Soviets reacted to discussions of West Germany's rearmament with an intensified policy towards the German question and tried to pressure the GDR into campaigning with an all-German election, but failed. The Stalin Note in 1952, proposing a unified and neutral Germany, was an unsuccessful attempt to prevent West Germany's NATO admission and further integration into the West, but it was also driven by a geostrategic motive: the possibility

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<sup>70</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 21.

<sup>71</sup>Gregor Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* [German foreign policy: From 1945 to present day], (Munich, Germany: C.H. Beck, 2013), 54–56; Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 30–31.

<sup>72</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 56; Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 31–32.

of enhanced US-Japanese relations due to the Korean War.<sup>73</sup> Although Adenauer rejected the Stalin Notes immediately, fearing a solution to the German question by the victors of World War II to the disadvantage of Germany, the SPD “saw the notes as a real opportunity to move closer to the goal of restoring German unity.”<sup>74</sup> Those plans were abandoned when, in June 1953, the worker uprising in East Berlin threatened the survival of the communist East German government under Walter Ulbricht. The Soviet Union, shortly after Stalin’s death, decided to use military force to end the demonstrations and support the GDR in political and military means, thereby introducing a shift in Soviet foreign policy that gave priority to the support and preservation of the GDR rather than countering improving relations with West Germany.<sup>75</sup>

After times of power struggle in Moscow, Nikita Khrushchev became the next Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) heading the Politburo. His regime put in hand a mini *détente*, which entertained ideas of pulling back on the Cold War front lines and of precursors of the policy solutions that did finally emerge in 1989. Adenauer accepted a surprise Soviet invitation to Moscow in September 1955 to discuss the German question and the release of German prisoners of war still held by the Soviet Union. After being received by Khrushchev and Prime Minister Bulganin, Moscow and Berlin agreed to establish diplomatic relations, while Adenauer made clear that such would not mean any recognition of the GDR.<sup>76</sup> It was a core part of the CDU’s and Adenauer’s *Deutschlandpolitik*, that is, the Hallstein Doctrine, for Germany not to have any diplomatic relations with nations that recognized the GDR, with the exception of the Soviet Union due to its immediate relevance and status. In that perception, the FRG was Germany, whereas the new GDR was only the Soviet Zone of Occupation, a bastard regime of Soviet vicegerents without legitimacy or any basis in constitutional heritage. In the chancellor’s report to the federal parliament, Adenauer stated that his

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<sup>73</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 46; Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 11.

<sup>74</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 34.

<sup>75</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 14.

<sup>76</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 39.



administration would regard any recognition of the GDR by a third state as an unfriendly act because it would support the deepening of Germany's two state situation.<sup>77</sup>

Throughout the later 1950s and the early 1960s, the relationship between the two German states became increasingly competitive in terms of attractiveness for its population. West Germany was experiencing an economic miracle with the help of the Allies and the Marshall Plan. While the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) in East Germany was content with economical output, it was struggling under the dismantling of its industrial base to the Soviet Union as part of the reparations of World War II. In addition, East Germans experienced arrests and purges in the wake of the 1953 uprising and enjoyed a lesser degree of freedom. The SED regime introduced a news series of socializing measures in 1958 at the time that Nikita Krushchev called for the wrapping up of four-power rule in divided Berlin.

West Germany enjoyed a freer society and an improved standard of living in the years 1958–1961, which led to about three million East Germans having fled to West Germany by 1961, posing a serious threat to East Germany.<sup>78</sup> The construction of the Berlin Wall started the night of August 12, 1961, and according to Schöllgen was the capitulation before the realities: the mass fleeing of the East German population in which a divided Germany might end with another 1953 uprising or worse.<sup>79</sup> The construction of the wall in the summer of 1961 also constituted a diplomatic revolution in the Cold War, once the confrontation reached its low point amid the prospect of thermonuclear war and the limits of the Adenauer regime and the Hallstein doctrine.

In the following weeks, the complete border between the FRG and GDR was closed with barbed wire, mine fields, and surveillance measures, thus sealing off East Germany and prompting horror, fear, and helplessness on the West German side. But none of the Allies, nor Germany itself, could do anything to stop the construction of the Wall and consequently had to accept and thus find a new way ahead in West German–

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<sup>77</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 39; Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 63.

<sup>78</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 291–92.

<sup>79</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 75.

Soviet relations other than perpetual conflict with the possibility of nuclear war and national extinction. The Allies and Germans in West Berlin knew that Khrushchev had threatened several times that a war over Berlin would turn nuclear; thus, it became clear that the Western powers—foremost Washington—would not be willing to risk a nuclear war with the Soviet Union.<sup>80</sup> West Germany quickly grew weary of the burdens of its status as a frontline state, while Adenauer continued to pursue the West integration. His “German policy . . . was to ignore, as far as possible, the Soviet Union and the other Communist regimes in East Europe.”<sup>81</sup> This confrontational *Ostpolitik* under Adenauer and the CDU did not bring any new impetus towards the German question. Thus, it was time to change Germany’s *Ostpolitik* as the Adenauer regime entered into its eclipse after 1961.<sup>82</sup>

The CDU had ruled in West Germany with Ludwig Erhard (from 1963 in a coalition with the FDP) and Kurt Kiesinger (from 1966 in a grand coalition with the SPD) until 1969, when the SPD, under Willy Brandt, the former first governing mayor of Berlin, formed a coalition with the liberal Free Democratic Party of Germany (FDP). It was the first time that the Social Democrats took over the governmental responsibility in West Germany. In the meantime, Leonid Brezhnev had succeeded Khrushchev in Moscow in 1964. Under Khrushchev and in the wake of the generalized prospect of the end of the world with the Cuban crisis of the fall of 1962, the first signs for *détente* with the West had appeared, such as the beginning of negotiations in 1959 regarding nuclear test bans, which were interrupted in the crises of 1961 and 1962 and the first grain import from the United States in 1963.<sup>83</sup>

The policy of “peaceful coexistence” was central to Khrushchev, who was trying to convince the world of the Soviet Union’s objective of securing a peaceful coexistence, because “the Cold War appeared to be winding down” in the years after 1962 and

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<sup>80</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945, 76–77.*

<sup>81</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 39; Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 63.

<sup>81</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 295.

<sup>82</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 12.

<sup>83</sup>Malia, *Soviet Tragedy*, 347.

because the United States had turned its attention to Indochina.<sup>84</sup> Brezhnev continued the path of *détente* towards the West, but he also oversaw the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, which sparked new fear in West Germany. With the possibility of the defection of the Central European satellite states declining after the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968, and with the division of Europe now secure, small revisions and a lessening of tension could resume. But on the grounds of the Brezhnev Doctrine, the Soviets achieved a feeling of flexibility in its *Westpolitik* without endangering Soviet hegemony in their sphere of influence, thus, opening the door for a more cooperational *Westpolitik*. In other words, while the Soviet satellites in Central and Eastern Europe were firmly under control, Moscow could be more flexible on its stance on relations with the West.

It was in this setting that German chancellor Willy Brandt's new *Ostpolitik* of being "willing to recognize the European status quo" fully initiated a new impetus for Soviet–West German *détente* in 1969.<sup>85</sup> For Brandt's social-liberal administration, it was important to reassure Western Allies of its loyalty to solidarity in the West and dismiss any rumors about a changing West German orientation of neutrality before embarking on the new *Ostpolitik*, which the chancellor achieved through engagement in the European Economic Community.<sup>86</sup> Brandt connected his *Ostpolitik* to three main objectives: (a) the social-liberal administration aimed at achieving a *modus vivendi* to deal with the divided Germany without recognizing it politically; (b) through actively participating in the *détente* process instead of denying it, Germany wanted to regain the initiative in dealing with the German question before the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and thus an eventual multilateral *détente*, convened; and (c) Germany wanted to improve the standards of living on both side of the Wall in Europe.<sup>87</sup> Egon Bahr's slogan *Wandel durch Annäherung*—"change through rapprochement"—became the motto for the new *Ostpolitik*, arguing "that a recognition of the geographical status quo was a

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<sup>84</sup>Malia, *Soviet Tragedy*, 326–333.

<sup>85</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 19.

<sup>86</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 69, 189.

<sup>87</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 188.

prerequisite to eventually overcoming the political status quo.”<sup>88</sup> But Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* led to the most controversial discussions in German politics and with the U.S. administration of Richard Nixon. As Haftendorn related to Henry Kissinger, “If any *détente* policy is to be pursued with the Soviet Union, then we’ll be the ones doing it.”<sup>89</sup> With the pre-1937 borders of Germany in mind as the measure of German nationhood, the German opposition leader, Rainer Barzel (CDU), after agreeing on the 1970 Renunciation of Force Treaty between the USSR and the FRG, accused Brandt of treason for having sold off former German territories in Central and Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union by ceding German demands.<sup>90</sup>

However, during Brandt’s tenure, the relations with the Soviet Union, but also his personal relationship with Leonid Brezhnev, improved significantly, which also fostered enhanced economic relations, as in 1970 when a first deal on Soviet export of natural gas was concluded, igniting energy relations that would gain substantial importance for Germany, Russia, and Europe as a whole.<sup>91</sup>

Despite the strong opposition to *détente* and *Ostpolitik*, the federal elections in 1972 showed sufficient support for Chancellor Brandt’s policy and a desire for the administration to continue its policy of *détente* with the East.<sup>92</sup> The factual recognition of the European geographical status quo by West Germany gave them new freedom to act and broadened their foreign policy options. On the issue of German-Soviet trade, German exports to the Soviet Union, mainly machinery and industrial technology, rose between 1973 and 1976 by 61 percent, while the Soviet Union continued to deliver natural resources.<sup>93</sup> On the issue of diplomatic relations between the East and West—the Warsaw Pact and NATO, respectively—two separate but parallel developments took place in 1973. On the one side, the Soviet initiative of the CSCE started in Helsinki,

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<sup>88</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 21.

<sup>89</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 189.

<sup>90</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 22.

<sup>91</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 136.

<sup>92</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 23.

<sup>93</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 218.

while NATO and the Warsaw Pact began negotiating possible Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) in Europe in the face of unilateral attempts in the U.S. Congress to withdraw U.S. forces in order to impose a greater defense burden on Western Europe amid the Indochina War and the invasion in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (CSSR). While the negotiations on MBFR did not achieve any results until 1989, the CSCE Final Act was signed in 1975 by thirty-three European states, the United States, and Canada, agreeing, among other things, on the renunciation of use of force, territorial integrity, inviolability of existing border, and peaceful mediation.<sup>94</sup> After a Soviet top spy had been uncovered in the direct vicinity of Chancellor Willy Brandt, who seemed to be exhausted by the office in the *Bundeskanzleramt*, Brandt was forced to step down and Helmut Schmidt (SPD) succeeded him.

Despite the fact that the Soviets could not achieve all their objectives at Helsinki, the conclusion of the Final Act was a major success for Brezhnev. It de facto legitimated the Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe for the time being and with little inkling of what lay ahead in the decade to come.<sup>95</sup> However, relations with West Germany did not improve any more for multiple reasons: Brezhnev became too ill after 1974 to advance the Soviet Union's Germany policy any further. The United States became increasingly disillusioned with *détente* and Schmidt over questions of nuclear deterrence, as well as with the impact of stagflation on the western economy. And despite pressure to back off economically in the German-Soviet relations, Brezhnev retained economic relations but committed himself to containing the Soviet military threat and remaining loyal to Germany's integration with the West with a dual track decision in 1977.<sup>96</sup> During Schmidt's first years of chancellery, two issues dominated the Soviet-German relations: trade and ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union. It was estimated that 1.9 million ethnic Germans lived in Soviet Central Asia who were eligible for emigration as they, like the Soviet Jewish population, had no national republic of their own, but only about sixty-two

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<sup>94</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 170.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>96</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 26–27.

thousand Germans were allowed to emigrate to the FRG and GDR in the 1970s.<sup>97</sup> West German–Soviet trade relations became a boost when, under the Schmidt administration in 1978, another cooperation agreement in the energy and natural resources sector was concluded, which, despite pressure from the United States, was not halted or cancelled as a result of the Soviet Afghanistan invasion in 1979.<sup>98</sup>

Schmidt wanted to enhance the *détente* process by adding components of arms-control at a time when the post-1973 military buildup in the Warsaw Pact (with the planned deployment of Soviet SS-20 medium range missiles) strengthened the Warsaw Pact and forced West Germany to rethink its defense if the medium-range missiles could not be included in an arms control regime.<sup>99</sup> The Soviet-American conclusion of the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) I and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 1972 had from a continental-European perspective manifested a de facto agreement on the non-use of strategic nuclear weapons above the intermediate-range level and enforced Schmidt's fear that the nuclear balance had tipped to the Soviets in Europe because it created an East-West disparity, thereby compromising European security.<sup>100</sup> In his 1977 speech in London, Schmidt called for a level of parity on all levels, not just on conventional systems but to include nuclear weapons. While Schmidt's initial aim was not a demand for new weapons, but for enhanced engagement within the MBFR talks, the main objective was to retain the engagement of the United States in Europe, which was in doubt in Schmidt's mind with the post-Vietnam malaise and the aborted attempt to deploy neutron tactical nuclear weapons.<sup>101</sup> While the Soviets favored Schmidt's *Ostpolitik*, they were reluctant to discuss any reductions of their missile capabilities with the United States and regarded Schmidt's engagement for retrofit armament (*Nachrüstung*) of the existing nuclear weapon systems at the end of the 1970s, as *détente*

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<sup>97</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 27.

<sup>98</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 186, 200, 210.

<sup>99</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 243.

<sup>100</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 192; Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 245.

<sup>101</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 193, 198.

expired, increasingly critical.<sup>102</sup> Schmidt was convinced that, after a failed arms control mechanism on intermediate nuclear missiles, only strong retrofit armament could ensure Western Europe's, and thus Germany's, security. It was West Germany's consistent pressure that led NATO to the double-track decision in 1979, which foresaw the deployment of modern Pershing-II systems and ground-based cruise missiles to Europe, thus underlining U.S. commitment to European security and assuring all levels of escalation in deterrence.<sup>103</sup> Despite Brezhnev's warning about *Nachrüstung*, Moscow could not prevent the decision. For Soviet-German relations, the NATO double-track decision posed a major setback, and fears of a renewed Cold War appeared, while domestically the double-track decision led to most controversial debates and manifestations.<sup>104</sup> In late 1982, Schmidt was toppled over the implementation of the NATO double-track decision in Germany, when his own coalition of SPD and FDP fell apart and the Bundestag voted on a resolution of no-confidence achieved by the CDU/CSU and FDP.

On October 1, 1982, Helmut Kohl (CDU) was elected by the Bundestag and took over office of the chancellery until the federal elections in March 1983. The Kohl administration was confirmed, while the Green Party for the first time entered the *Bundestag* (the federal German parliament), which necessitated coalition with the FDP.<sup>105</sup> Domestic tensions in West Germany grew stronger after the *Bundestag* decided in October 1983 to implement the NATO double-track decision by allowing the deployment of U.S. Pershing-II systems to Germany, which, in the light of the 1979 Afghanistan crisis and the 1980–1981 situation in Poland, marked an absolute low in the German-Soviet and the East-West relations.<sup>106</sup> The situation was marked by the deployment of Soviet SS-12/22 to Central Europe and a propaganda effort aiming at pacifist and anti-American sentiment in the German public. The Soviets stressed historic

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<sup>102</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 28.

<sup>103</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 198.

<sup>104</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 28; Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 199; Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 257–59.

<sup>105</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 204–5.

<sup>106</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 270; Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 205.

fears derived from German aggression against the Soviet Union in two world wars and underlined the sacrifices endured by the Soviet population—which continued to affect the Soviet people—warning that Germany should not threaten the Soviet Union again and accusing Germany of revanchist attitudes.<sup>107</sup> One consequence, which the Soviets failed to understand, is how the Kohl government resisted the urge to go neutral and that increased Soviet pressure—military and political—drove West Germany westwards and enhanced the American–West German cohesion at the height of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) crisis in the years 1983–1985.<sup>108</sup>

Brezhnev’s successors, Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, both died only months after taking over the office of Secretary General of the CPSU, which led to a stagnation in the Soviet Union’s foreign policy until the accession of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985. The comparably young Secretary General was driven by concerns for Soviet collapse due to the devastating state of the Soviet economy, and less by communist ideology, as his goal was to strengthen the Soviet Union economically and politically to develop its international competitiveness.<sup>109</sup> Recognizing that the Soviet Union was in a terrible state—“suffering a moral, cultural and economic crisis”<sup>110</sup>—Gorbachev introduced a major reform to modernize Soviet society and socialism—*Perestroika*—which was tied to an inherent new approach in the Soviet Union. The “new thinking,” introduced by Gorbachev, led to a revival of *détente* between East and West in 1986 with the Reykjavik proposal to abolish nuclear weapons on the grounds of Gorbachev’s disarmament proposals and enabled the continuation of negotiations for the INF Treaty, which was concluded in December 1987.<sup>111</sup> Gorbachev needed the INF Treaty to be a foreign policy success because with the nuclear catastrophe in Chernobyl in 1986, the international reputation of the Soviet Union and its leadership had been damaged. The Soviet Union’s military power was the dominant factor in its foreign policy, but due to

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<sup>107</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 34.

<sup>108</sup>Laird, *Soviets, Germany, and the New Europe*, 41.

<sup>109</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 270.

<sup>110</sup>Laird, *Soviets, Germany, and the New Europe*, 29.

<sup>111</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 216; Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 277.



the technological backwardness, the superpower status was eroding. Consequently, the new thinking in foreign and security policy was closely connected to the domestic state of affairs when Gorbachev decided to cut military spending in favor of industrial modernization.<sup>112</sup>

Gorbachev announced such additional signals in 1987–1988 that were interpreted as cooperative, as with the withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan and further reforms in Eastern Europe. The Soviets underestimated the severity of the Eastern European situation because “the majority of them did not favor the reform of socialism—they wanted to get rid of it.”<sup>113</sup> While the Soviet’s policy regarding Eastern Europe was contradictory in the early years, it became increasingly clear that the Soviet Union and its empire had lost its legitimacy, which Gorbachev failed to recognize.<sup>114</sup> Gradually, Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union would no longer interfere militarily to impose stability and order in any of its socialist Eastern European states, thus ending the Brezhnev doctrine à la Czechoslovakia in 1968 and opening the way for democratization and liberalization in Eastern Europe.<sup>115</sup> The first signs of change came from Poland, where the labor union *Solidarnosc*, founded in 1980, initiated severe general strikes, which led to free elections in June 1989, while at the same time the nationalists in the Baltic States urged the Soviet Union to admit the details of the Hitler-Stalin Pact from 1939.<sup>116</sup> The independence movements among the nationalities within the Soviet Union grew and threatened the stability of the Soviet imperial system. However, in the face of such generalized reform, the GDR’s anti-*Perestroika* regime under Erich Honecker was reluctant to reform and implement measures of *Glasnost* because it feared the repetitions of 1953 and 1971. Honecker still believed in true socialism in its original post-1949 model and resented Gorbachev’s new thinking. Even if Soviet-GDR relations had already been tense when Gorbachev assumed office, they worsened as an *Intimfeinschaft*

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<sup>112</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 46.

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>115</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 278; Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 50.

<sup>116</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 228.

(personal antagonism) between Gorbachev and Honecker developed through the fall of 1989, which increasingly undermined Soviet-GDR relations, in times where they would be needed more than ever, in order to stabilize the turbulent times, even in the GDR.<sup>117</sup> In the summer of 1989, tensions in the GDR grew significantly as thousands of East Germans assembled each Monday for demonstrations calling for peace, reconciliation, and liberalization; and East German citizens fled into the West German embassies in Prague and Warsaw, seeking emigration through the now semi-open border to the south. The opening of the “Iron Curtain” between Austria and Hungary, which was publicly done by the respective ministers of foreign affairs in June 1989, acted as a catalyst to the situation in the GDR, as tens of thousands traveled to Hungary and Czechoslovakia in order to cross the border into Austria and the FRG.<sup>118</sup> Gorbachev had supported the liberalization by *Perestroika* and, as long as the territorial cohesion of the Soviet Union was not in danger, tolerated the developments, which changed once the Soviet republics declared their wish for independence.<sup>119</sup> The developments in 1989 now eclipsed those of 1953, 1956, and 1968 in a way that astonished all concerned.

Therefore, Gorbachev’s long-planned visit to the FRG in June 1989 came during troubling times for the Soviet Union. It was, however, a visit with tremendous relevance because it not changed the mutual perception in West Germany and the Soviet Union, despite the low in personal relations between Kohl and Gorbachev, which was based, among other things, on Kohl’s inadvertent and indirect 1986 comparison of Gorbachev to Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels. The population received Gorbachev like a hero, and the two men developed a special and close relationship, which would show its historic significance in the critical months that lay ahead, which would be full of surprises.<sup>120</sup> Although hopes for unification were heard among the German public, the Soviet leader denied publicly any reports about a possibility that the Berlin Wall could come down in the near future, while in the GDR, Erich Honecker had envisioned, in January 1989, that

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<sup>117</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 51–52.

<sup>118</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 276.

<sup>119</sup>*Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>120</sup>Laird, *Soviets, Germany, and the New Europe*, 156; Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 278.

the Wall would stand another fifty to a hundred years.<sup>121</sup> The latest crisis in NATO over the modernization of short-range nuclear weapons had just been solved with a strong West German effort at nuclear roll back, and West Germany's Allies, especially France, again raised concerns about a "Rapallo repeated" on the grounds of the Joint Declaration between the FRG and the Soviet Union. The GDR under Honecker, who was still not willing or able to realize the situation and to initiate reforms, became increasingly isolated, especially after the approval of China's actions against demonstrating dissidents in the Tianamen Square of Beijing, which turned into a bloody massacre, which spread fear among the Monday demonstrators in East Germany that a "Chinese solution" awaited them at the hands of the Stasi and the *Nationale Volksarmee* (NVA).<sup>122</sup> The change towards more freedom and liberalization in Eastern Europe was inevitable, but Gorbachev and his minister of foreign affairs, Eduard Shevardnadze, still aimed at retaining a socialist system and hoped for a gradual and slower process of change in order to influence changes in Eastern Europe in the Soviet Union's favor.<sup>123</sup>

While the East Germans were fleeing the GDR and continued their manifestations on the East German streets in October 1989, the SED *Politbuero* under Honecker commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the GDR with great pomp on October 6 and 7. Heads of state and governments from various socialist countries attended the celebration. Among them, most prominently, was Mikhail Gorbachev, who still envisioned a reform of the communist system in the GDR.<sup>124</sup> Only days after the anniversary, Erich Honecker stepped down and was succeeded by Egon Krenz, while the masses on the street, encouraged by the anti-socialist and national developments in Poland with the advent of free elections, took over the agenda in the GDR, which led to the more or less accidental lift of the travel ban on November 9, 1989.<sup>125</sup> When the masses headed to the border-control posts and crossed the border into the FRG with the quiet assent of the Stasi

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<sup>121</sup>Laird, *Soviets, Germany, and the New Europe*, 160; Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 229.

<sup>122</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 229.

<sup>123</sup>Laird, *Soviets, Germany, and the New Europe*, 165.

<sup>124</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 232.

<sup>125</sup>*Ibid.*, 233.

guards, this remarkable moment marked the beginning of the end of the GDR—a decisive step towards reunification, which came as a surprise to all participants in Eastern and Western Europe, as well as across the Atlantic. This moment also changed German-Russian relations in a fundamental manner and began the eradication of the epoch of confrontation that reached back to June 22, 1941, and all the suffering in the decades since.

### C. RUSSIA AND A REUNIFIED GERMANY

Despite Kohl's warning about exaggerated expectations and strong opposition to a reunified Germany from London and Paris, as well as from Moscow, where "nerves were on the edge"<sup>126</sup> (Gorbachev had warned Kohl not to question the territorial status quo which foresaw the *Zweistaatlichkeit* for Germany), Germany's reunification came sooner than expected because no one could control the thrust of public will, and those in a position actually to influence events came to see the utility of a peaceful unification. While the decision-makers in Berlin and Moscow were literally overran by the situation, calls for the deployment of Soviet "intervention and blocking divisions along the border" of the GDR and the use of the NVA were brought up by hardliners in Moscow and within the SED in early November 1989.<sup>127</sup> Gorbachev resisted these calls and affirmed Krenz on November 10 that the GDR had acted correctly by preventing bloodshed, although in reality, the Soviet Union had made the decision to open the border by renouncing the use of force to prevent it in the hours after the declaration of a generalized freedom of travel on November 9.<sup>128</sup>

Receiving ambiguous signals from the Soviet Union and opposition from the European allies, but more or less with the support of the United States and President George Bush, West Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl seized the opportunity and embarked on a unilateral approach in which the United States and the USSR followed along. In order to retain the initiative, and to avoid reacting to East German proposals,

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<sup>126</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 280.

<sup>127</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 96.

<sup>128</sup>*Ibid.*, 96–97.

Kohl presented a ten-point paper to the German parliament on November 28, 1989, to prepare the way for reunification. Kohl felt he needed to hurry, fearing that the Soviet Union could oppose any further rapprochement between the two parts of Germany.<sup>129</sup> Kohl did this without consulting any of his allies, which led to widespread skepticism in London and Paris about Germany's new role, while the Soviets were outraged and felt betrayed. The fierce criticism included Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze allegedly stating that "not even Hitler behaved in such a way,"<sup>130</sup> as the Soviets interpreted Kohl's approach as interference in the GDR's internal affairs and opposed it. The United States under President George Bush and Spain were the only Allies of West Germany that supported a reunified Germany from the very beginning. None of the other key allies, the 1945 victors (who retained their reserved rights for Germany as a whole in international law), France, Great Britain, or especially the Soviet Union were in favor of reunification. Although Gorbachev knew it was inevitable, reunification was not foreseen at that early time, and France and Great Britain relied on exactly that Soviet position, firmly opposing Germany's reunification.<sup>131</sup>

In its support of a united Germany, the Bush administration adhered to the statecraft of the last four decades against neutrality for Germany and pushed for continuous NATO membership. The United States outlined these parameters to Kohl before the chancellor met with Gorbachev in Moscow in February 1990.<sup>132</sup> While the growing numbers of demonstrators on the East German streets chanted "*Wir sind ein Volk*" (we are one people), it became clear that Germany's reunification became increasingly inevitable. Kohl's visit to Moscow was a game changer, as Gorbachev generally accepted German reunification, with three preconditions. Stent notes that that, despite the importance and past dominance of the German question within Soviet Foreign policy, hardly any initiatives came from the Kremlin at this time, and Gorbachev at least knew that he depended on de-conflicted relations with the West, especially with West

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<sup>129</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 235.

<sup>130</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 283.

<sup>131</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 243.

<sup>132</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 285.

Germany, as his reforms—*Perestroika* and *Glasnost*—could be successful only with outside help.<sup>133</sup> The Soviet general secretary faced constant internal crisis and allegedly realized that West Germany was a “most promising partner to help with the modernization of the Soviet economy that he envisioned.”<sup>134</sup> Thus, Gorbachev stated three preconditions for Soviet assent: (1) recognition of current borders, especially Germany’s East border; (2) substantial economic aid for the Soviet Union, including transition costs for Soviet forces in Germany; (3) and renunciation of NATO membership.<sup>135</sup> According to Laird, it was also critical to Gorbachev to limit the *Bundeswehr* to 300,000 troops. In the end, a ceiling of 370,000 troops was accepted.<sup>136</sup> With the Soviets general acceptance of Germany’s self-determination, the way was free for intra-German negotiations on the internal terms of reunification.

In the first democratic *Volkskammer* elections in March 1990, 49.8 percent of the East German population voted for the CDU and its conservative allies, thus legitimizing a fast path to reunification. The negotiations on reunification between the West and East German cabinets after the *Volkskammer* elections led to the Treaty of Unification August 31, 1990, as a precondition for a unified Germany, which depended then solely on the approval of the four victorious powers.<sup>137</sup> With Soviet leadership, foremost Gorbachev, having accepted reality, the Soviets used the 2+4 negotiations “to maximize the gains from West Germany.”<sup>138</sup>

West German Chancellor Kohl had the coordinating role in setting the agenda and, according to Haftendorn, felt that Gorbachev’s position had not been finalized, recognizing the internal opposition in the Kremlin and the immense financial problems Moscow was facing.<sup>139</sup> The Soviets were well aware that they could not stop Germany’s

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<sup>133</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 101.

<sup>134</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 286.

<sup>135</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 244; see also Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 294.

<sup>136</sup>Laird, *Soviets, Germany, and the New Europe*, 173.

<sup>137</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 292.

<sup>138</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 106.

<sup>139</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 295.

road to unification but tried to exert leverage on external conditions, such as the veto of NATO membership and stationing foreign troops in Germany. During the negotiations, the Soviets asked for multi-billion credits, which the German government generally granted if the Soviets would regard the substantial German economic and financial support in the 2+4 framework as part of the solution to the German question. The Soviets repeatedly changed their position in regards to alliance membership. It was only after the 28th Congress of the Communist Party, where Gorbachev was reelected as general secretary, and NATO's London declaration of the end of the Cold War in which the Alliance offered dialogue and cooperation to the Soviet Union, that he agreed to Germany's right to self-determination in the context of alliance affiliation. Thus, Gorbachev could save face and demand a bilateral German-Russian Treaty on Cooperation and Good Neighborly Relations, which detailed the stationing and repositioning of Soviet troops in the GDR, as well as additional financial support of 12 billion *Deutschmark*.<sup>140</sup> The treaties with Germany were very contentious in the Soviet Union and in the Supreme Soviet. Foreign minister Shevardnadze was faced with fierce criticism by the communist *nomenklatura*, which accused Gorbachev and him of "having sold out Soviet interests."<sup>141</sup>

The progress on the Treaty on Cooperation and Good Neighborly Relations between the Soviet Union and West Germany removed the last contentious obstacles towards finalization of the 2+4 negotiations. After West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher assured the Soviets that NATO would not be expanded eastwards into the territory of the GDR, and once issues about the *Bundeswehr*'s dual-use weapons and allied troop movements in the GDR had been clarified, the 2+4 Treaty was signed in Moscow on September 12, 1990; on October 1, the four powers declared the termination of their rights and responsibilities effected by reunification.<sup>142</sup> On October 3, 1990, the flag of the Federal Republic of Germany was the only German flag hoisted in front of the Berlin *Reichstagsgebäude*, the current parliament of reunified Germany.

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<sup>140</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 301–2.

<sup>141</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 142.

<sup>142</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 249; see also Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 303–4.

The German reunification was more than just a merger or an incorporation of a geographical region. It was the re-foundation of a completely sovereign nation state in Germany at the geographical center of Europe, changing the balance of power in Europe—"a seismic change in the European security system,"<sup>143</sup> according to Angela Stent. Especially from a Soviet perspective, which had regarded the GDR as its "jewel in the crown of the Soviet Empire,"<sup>144</sup> and the divided Germany as the price the Germans had to pay for the atrocities against the Soviet Union during the Second World War, the reunification questioned not only the status quo, but also the sacrifices made by the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War.<sup>145</sup> But the formal reunification did not automatically mean that the nation was really "one people," as declared during the *Montagsdemonstrationen* (Monday demonstrations) on the East German streets. More than forty years of Soviet influence, as well as the longer period of the combined Nazi dictatorship and Soviet sponsored rule, "left its mark on the biographies of the people"<sup>146</sup> in the GDR.

Despite the fact that Germans in the GDR never developed a real socialist identity, as propagated by the SED since 1949 and especially since 1961, after the reunification it turned out that East Germans had indeed acquired their own identity, influenced by Soviet occupation, political socialization, and isolation from the West—a fact not wholly appreciated by westerners who newly discovered the society of the ex-GDR in 1990 for themselves.<sup>147</sup> In addition, the economic and financial conditions of the reunification process, such as the introduction and exchange of the *Deutschmark*, was felt by critics and proponents of an alternate path to unity to be imposed by West Germany. Both sides had to make concessions, but in the East, most of the social achievements (the equality of women in the workplace, as well as a more egalitarian society not so burdened with materialism) during Soviet occupation and the GDR were destroyed in the manner

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<sup>143</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 147.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 107.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., 102.

<sup>146</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 304.

<sup>147</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 31.



that the SED propagandist and doomsayers had predicted from 1958 until 1961 and thereafter to justify the wall.<sup>148</sup> This different attitude was expressed by the differentiation in *Ossis* (East Germans) and *Wessis* (West Germans) in the 1990s. This phenomenon also played a role in the 2014 crisis as to the fate of Ukraine and the willingness among a significant percentage of the German body politic to embrace the argumentation of Soviet apologia, which will be further discussed in Chapter III, Section C.

The perception of Germany's reunification differed widely depending on where one stood on October 2, 1990, and was colored by what occurred in the decade that followed. While the people in unified Germany celebrated, critics in France, Great Britain, and Poland regarded the reunification with deep skepticism and fear for German revanchism and the return of an unhappy past that had seemed forever vanished by the post-1945 order. The people in the Soviet Union, however, were split in their opinion of Germany's reunification. The divided Germany was perceived as a war trophy, and it resembled—in the Soviet perspective—the price that the Germans had to pay. The people, too, were divided on whether the Soviet Union had lost its war gains from the Second World War and whether the reunification should be perceived with satisfaction or anxiety.<sup>149</sup> In Moscow, the old guard of government officials (the conservative *Germanisty*), who had ensured that two Germanys did not threaten the Soviet Union, felt betrayed by the events.<sup>150</sup> The most prominent opposition member was Yegor Legachev, who voiced critique and opposition of conservatives in Moscow, especially the military establishment, calling for dealing with the threats of a united Germany and arguing that it would be a mistake and “unbelievably short-sided . . . if we did not see a Germany with huge economic and military potential looming on the international horizon. It is time to recognize the new danger.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 289.

<sup>149</sup>Laird, *Soviets, Germany, and the New Europe*, 188.

<sup>150</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 106.

<sup>151</sup>Laird, *Soviets, Germany, and the New Europe*, 202–3.

For the Germans, reunification was a new beginning for a sovereign Germany that could finally proceed beyond the age of total war; for the Soviets, it was the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union. As the dynamics of Germany's reunification acted as a catalyst for further geopolitical revision in central and Eastern Europe, and finally in 1991 during the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Shevardnadze warned critics of the Soviet Union's internal stability, stressing that "foreign policy is the continuation of domestic policy, and we should always bear this in mind."<sup>152</sup> The process by which the Soviet Union agreed to Germany's reunification did have long-lasting impact and continues to influence German-Russian perceptions today. Soviet leadership was literally overrun by the events in East Germany, as the fall of the Berlin Wall was a *fait accompli*, before Moscow even realized it. The Soviets were on the sidelines of historic events, notwithstanding their important role; but as Stent put it, the Soviet representatives in East Berlin "were told of developments after, and not before, they took place,"<sup>153</sup> thus reducing the role of the Soviet Union to a passive bystander. Reunification took place under the influence of Soviet internal unrest. Gorbachev was preoccupied with the situation in the Soviet Union and tried to retain power in the Kremlin. Moreover, Gorbachev "clearly believed that by making concessions to Kohl on unification, the Germans would become de facto supporters in Gorbachev's efforts to maintain central control in the USSR"<sup>154</sup> and reorganize the Soviet Union, calm internal tensions, and reshape the European order. The Kremlin's calculation was that, "if German attitudes could be shaped to be supportive of long-term Soviet objectives, then unification was worth the cost."<sup>155</sup> With 350,000 Soviet troops still stationed in East Germany, and with operations in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius and in Latvia in early 1991 against the independence movement, the German government feared uncertainty that further disintegration of the Soviet Union would lead to uncontrollable military and political events that would threaten the stability of Europe.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>Shevardnadze cited in Laird, *Soviets, Germany, and the New Europe*, 203.

<sup>153</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 107.

<sup>154</sup>Laird, *Soviets, Germany, and the New Europe*, 207.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>156</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 155.

Despite strong German support for Gorbachev to maintain the Soviet Union, the independence of the Baltic States and other non-Russian republics in 1990–1991, as well as the increasingly fierce battle between reformers and anti-reformers in the Soviet Union, led to the political emergence of Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the August 1991 coup against Gorbachev, staged by Soviet conservative anti-reformers. Although Gorbachev survived the coup, he could not survive politically because the Soviet Union had disintegrated. Thus, Gorbachev resigned on December 25 and handed the Kremlin over to Russian President Yeltsin, and the Soviet Union ceased to exist.<sup>157</sup>

Russia's rebirth and the dissolution of the Soviet Union had a major impact on the European balance of power, especially its security. The United States accelerated its retreat from its former primacy in European security to the Middle East, with the onset of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in the months prior to Germany's unity in the fall of 1990. West Germany's tradition of multilateral approaches paid off during the reunification and Germany's engagement in the multilateral system (UN, NATO, OSCE, and EU) remained in place after unification, which was already being challenged by the crises in the Middle East and then on the Balkans with the violent breakup of Yugoslavia.<sup>158</sup> Meanwhile "Germany's habit of self-restraint, which over the years had been used to compensate for the lack of sovereignty, became no longer necessary,"<sup>159</sup> and the political leadership and elite saw no reason for radical foreign policy change in the first eighteen months of unity and beyond because the objective after reunification was continuity. The fact that disunity and chaos would eventuate in Southeastern Europe and the Middle East could, at first, be ignored in Bonn because of this political culture of reticence. Geographically, the end of the Cold War put Germany in the center of a Europe that more or less came to peace in the 1990s, while politically it became a bridging state between East and West. Germany's interests in the Russian transformation was immense, as by January 1992 and until 1994 still more than 100,000 (Soviet) Russian troops were stationed in Germany. The coup in 1991 against Gorbachev and in 1993 against Yeltsin

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<sup>157</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 254; Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 154–55.

<sup>158</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 5.

<sup>159</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

worried German politicians because the respected treaties between Germany and the Soviet Union/Russia had not been completely fulfilled (e.g., the withdrawal of all troops from Germany). Germany, in strong support of Mikhail Gorbachev, was initially unaware of Yeltsin but quickly decided to support him in economic and political terms because Kohl realized that good relations with Yeltsin were imperative for the transition in Russia.<sup>160</sup>

A united Germany and the new Russian Federation had similar challenges ahead of them. Though economically and socially very different, the foreign policy challenges shared similarities. Both countries were new to Europe in 1990 and 1991, in terms of their borders of; both countries were preoccupied with domestic policy issues; and both countries needed to redefine their foreign policies. Thus, both countries faced uncertainties in their future roles while the global system advanced with new centers of gravity in the Middle East and Asia.<sup>161</sup> While Russia had to redefine its relationship to its closest neighbors—the former Soviet republics—Germany faced expectations from its allies to engage more in the questions of security in Europe, especially in regards to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, where, due to the dissolution of the Yugoslav state, ethnic tensions had led to civil war in 1991. Germany had to balance between its efforts to eliminate any doubts on its *Westintegration* and post-1990 *Ostpolitik*. The diplomatic revolution of 1989–1991, however, had returned the fate of *Zwischeneuropa* to the fore and made Central European nations look westward in hopes of statecraft, a fact that led to the need to adjust the Western European security structure in an unexpected manner. Central to this in the Kohl cabinet was a desire to reconcile with Warsaw, modeling on reconciliation with Paris from three decades before. A major objective of Germany's foreign policy was to diffuse any Russian concerns regarding the NATO and EU enlargement, thus integrating the former Warsaw Pact and Central European states into the western alliance and at the same time rethinking the use of military force in the face of rising conflict in southern Europe and the Middle East.<sup>162</sup> On the one hand, Germany

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<sup>160</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 158.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid., 152–53.

<sup>162</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 75.

engaged in promoting democratic security development in Central and Eastern Europe, while on the other hand, Germany recognized that it needed to spend more resources to internally stabilize Russia.<sup>163</sup> Because Germany had recognized its special responsibility towards Russia due to the Soviet support of reunification, Russian politicians perceived Germany to be a bridging state that “had more understanding for Russia’s problems than did any other Western country.”<sup>164</sup> Therefore, it is no surprise that Germany, with its vital interest of stability in Central and Eastern Europe after its own unhappy career as a divided, front state, argued in 1993 for NATO enlargement. A policy was advanced by German Minister of Defence Volker Rühe, who called not only for rapprochement but also for integration of former Warsaw Pact states.<sup>165</sup> Russia had continuously objected to any NATO enlargement process as early as 1994, when President Yeltsin warned about the possibility of a “Cold Peace” in its West relations.<sup>166</sup> Despite these early objections, once the Alliance accepted the decision for enlargement in late 1995, the triumvirate of Bill Clinton, Helmut Kohl, and Boris Yeltsin adjudicated the enlargement of NATO through the year 1999 in a way that is belied by 2014 propaganda to the contrary. It was after the second round of enlargement in 2004 that, as argued in the Ukraine case, Russia opposed the NATO enlargement, provoking a crisis in Russia’s West relations.

Although Russia was less concerned with new policies in Central and Eastern Europe, their concern was to avoid any economical or territorial threat to Russia that would evolve from NATO membership, thus excluding Moscow from future security structures and decision-making.<sup>167</sup>

German politicians under the Kohl administration claimed continuity as the guideline for German foreign policy after reunification, and they engaged within their multilateral framework to develop a European pillar of defense to support the U.S. efforts to adapt NATO to its new challenges, and to promote closer relations between Russia and

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<sup>163</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 157.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid.

<sup>165</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 132; Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 217.

<sup>166</sup>Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act*, 289.

<sup>167</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 208.

Euro-Atlantic structures beyond the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).<sup>168</sup> Nonetheless, the speed of change in the international system exceeded the formation of consensus in a united Germany in the early and mid-1990s, where the process of political adaptation to insecurity was rightfully slow and methodical. A significant milestone had been the 1994 adjustment to the mission of the *Bundeswehr* to include collective security under Article 24 of the Basic Law versus the strict Central European focus of Article 87a of the mid 1950s, as ruled by the Federal Constitutional Court. While the first years were characterized by domestic discussions on Germany's new role in Europe, a "modified continuity" in foreign policy could be observed. A change became apparent only after 1998, when a socialist-environmentalist government coalition between the SPD and the party *Die Grünen* took over the German chancellery. With the global crisis—Germany was particularly concerned about the situation in the Balkans—Germany's constitutional court (the *Bundesverfassungsgericht*) permitted the deployment of the *Bundeswehr* in the UN-mandated framework of international organizations in 1994. Thus, in the perspective of many scholars, Germany's foreign policy moved from "modified continuity" to a matured self-conscious power.<sup>169</sup> Although the new Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer promoted continuity, chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, in 1998, stood for change and pledged German troops for combat operations against Serbia to demonstrate to Slobodan Milosevic that Germany would not allow a rift within NATO on that question.<sup>170</sup> Fischer explained the decision to intervene with the imperative "*Nie wieder Auschwitz*" (never again Auschwitz), referring to Germany's historic past and its ambiguous relation with military power in the face of seemingly unending atrocities in Bosnia and then in Kosovo.<sup>171</sup> However, in 1998 at Rambouillet, Russia strongly opposed any military operation against Serbia because they regarded the unmandated operations as unlawful acts of aggression. Ironically, the lack of an UN mandate was due to Russia's veto.

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<sup>168</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 353.

<sup>169</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 77.

<sup>170</sup>Hans Kundnani, *The Paradox of German Power* (New York: Oxford University, 2015), 51.

<sup>171</sup>*Ibid.*, 52; Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 269.

The Russian decision to veto a United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) on Kosovo in 1998–1999 was a disappointment for the West because, despite Russia’s internal situation, the external relations with the West had improved after the NATO-Russia Founding Act in 1997 and participation of Russian troops in NATO-led peacekeeping operations in Bosnia. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the idealistic perception of Russia coming closer to the European security architecture, which Germany promoted and favored, did not lead to Russia “link[ing] its fate to the institutional structure of the liberal democratic West.” Instead, such was compromised, and in 1999 it nearly led to a military confrontation at the Pristina International Airport in Kosovo between Russian paratroopers and NATO soldiers in which U.S. General Wesley Clark nearly precipitated a military confrontation.<sup>172</sup> With Boris Yeltsin’s decline and the rise of Russian nationalists, such as Victor Zhirinovskiy, who dominated the middle to late 1990s and gave the West and the Germans reason to worry about Russia’s future, western criticism of Russia on the Second Chechnyan War and the political division between Russia and the West over NATO’s Kosovo campaign complicated Russian-West and especially German-Russian relations decisively. The Russian opposition marked a partial resurgence of Russia after its weak performance in the wake of the Soviet Union’s disintegration, and subsequently its transformation from a communist system to a super-presidential system, supposedly leading to a democracy.<sup>173</sup> Yet, in the midst of NATO’s Kosovo operation, the alliance enlarged to include Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, and though the Russians may have disliked the event, they did nothing in any concrete way to stop such action, just as they did nothing concretely to oppose the NATO campaign in Kosovo against the dead-end Milosevic regime.

Vladimir Putin’s rise and his successor Boris Yeltsin were widely welcomed by the Western world with the hope that a new leader in Russia would bring positive change, especially because “Russia looked dangerously close to becoming a failed state, . . . whose dangerous unpredictability rendered it a menace against which the West needed to

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<sup>172</sup>Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 25–26.

<sup>173</sup>Christian Wipperfürth, *Russlands Außenpolitik* [Russia’s foreign policy] (Wiesbaden, Germany: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften-Springer Fachmedien, 2011), 9.

guard itself.”<sup>174</sup> The new Russian president emerged from the conservative circles of the security-military-intelligence community, as a former foreign intelligence officer with a strong German expertise, and thus expectations were high for a changing Russia, which in 2000 was chaotic and collapsing.<sup>175</sup> Putin centralized the state and reorganized the economy on a neo-mercantilist, post-communist order of state capitalism and was committed to the “normalization of Russia and its foreign policy as just another ‘normal great power.’”<sup>176</sup> Therefore, Putin engaged with Germany and found in Chancellor Schroeder and his pragmatic approach to foreign policy a strategic partner, acknowledging the point that Russia needed partners in the West, while Schroeder was convinced that security and economic well-being in Europe could be achieved only through a strategic partnership with Russia.<sup>177</sup> As the course of European unity advanced along with the rigors of globalization, along with the need to modernize the social market economy in trains, Germany’s economy became increasingly dependent on exports. It was no surprise, then, that Chancellor Schroeder turned to Russia, especially regarding energy security and commerce. Schroeder and Putin developed a pragmatic and friendly relationship, which characterized the foreign policy between the two countries. In the process of this bilateral relation, old east-west structures in a new personalized form reasserted themselves in the political economy of German-Russian trade. While the German economy’s *Ostausschuss* (the committee on Eastern European Economic Relations) lobbied for enhanced German-Russian relations, the two presidents created the Petersberger Dialogue in 2001 in order to promote a strategic partnership for economical and political cooperation beyond regular government relations and to draw Russia closer to Europe.<sup>178</sup> German-Russian relations developed well, especially in the energy sector, with Germany becoming a major partner in energy trade. By concluding a German-Russian pipeline deal in 2005, Schroeder permitted Europe’s increased dependency of

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<sup>174</sup> Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 25.

<sup>175</sup> Stephen K. Wegren, ed., *Return to Putin’s Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, 5th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), 11.

<sup>176</sup> Richard Sakwa, “Political Leadership,” in Stephen K. Wegren, ed., *Return to Putin’s Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, 5th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), 25.

<sup>177</sup> Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 295.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 296; Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 373.



Russian gas and oil delivery, and by 2008 Germany was importing 36 percent of its gas and 32 percent of its oil from Russia; overall exports to Russia summed up to \$36 billion.<sup>179</sup>

With Germany having become Russia's largest trade partner, Schroeder tightened the German-Russian relations and refrained from criticizing Russia too harshly in public. For example, he refrained from criticizing Russia's concerning lack of democratic developments and Putin's increasingly authoritarian presidency, even calling him a "flawless democrat."<sup>180</sup> In regards to foreign policy, Germany became more mature and self-conscious under Schroeder, compared to the first half of the 1990s. Germany started going the "German way" in terms of national interests in the midst of a changing world and European order, whereby the national effort at unity promised great payoffs in globalization and a new continental orientation. When Chancellor Schroeder declared the "German Way" in the context of the decision not to participate in the Iraqi invasion of 2002–2003, this policy was a continuation of saying no to the old "out of area" dictum from 1955 onward. Nevertheless, such policy was put in hands with a populist, anti-American election campaign especially aimed at the electorate in the five new federal states. Schroeder made common cause with the French and Russians in an open conflict with the United States, which considered the Iraq invasion a matter of national interest closely connected to the September 11 terror attack on the United States.<sup>181</sup> The putative alliance between France, Germany, and Russia raised concerns among Schroeder's critics, not only regarding the specific issue of invading Iraq, but also regarding future aspects of reliability as an ally, especially after Schroeder had pledged Germany's unlimited solidarity in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington in 2001 and had supported not only the NATO decision to activate Article 5, but also the combat operations against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan with a limited German military engagement in the counter-terror campaign there.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 80.

<sup>180</sup>*Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>181</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 385.

<sup>182</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 272–73.

While Germany's foreign policy towards Russia under Gerhard Schroeder had, at the cost of Atlanticism, become increasingly focused on the economy, the new German Chancellor Angela Merkel promised in 2005, after taking office in the *Bundeskanzleramt* (the office of the Chancellery) to refocus on value-based foreign policy, to distance herself from Moscow, and to repair the damaged ties with Washington, DC. However, Merkel did not revert from the export-oriented policy demanded by globalization and the prospect of Eurasian markets. Based on her origin in East Germany, she not only spoke Russian, but also reflected on the past experiences with the Soviets in East Germany. She was not a member of the *Jungsozialisten* (the young socialists) nor a veteran of the politics of the FRG in the 1960s and 1970s, with its anti-American stripe, as had been central to Schroeder's statecraft in power. Merkel emerged from the Lutheran *Bildungsbuergertum* as a professor of physics in the GDR, the social class well positioned for power in 1990. Thus, she was neither idealistic nor naïve regarding Russia, as her predecessors had been.<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless, Chancellor Merkel addressed such contentious topics as human rights abuses, but as with the case of the 2008 Georgian War, she acted rather in a reserved way to maintain a close dialogue with Russia, while at the same time addressing topics that the public expected her to address regarding Russia; however, the tone from Germany's Chancellery and Foreign Office remained widely non-committal.<sup>184</sup>

The 2008 Georgian War came as a surprise to the West and has assumed special importance when seen from the perspective of 2014 and Crimea. Georgia had been a possible candidate for NATO membership, and although Germany and France opposed such accession, some progress could be observed in the transition of Georgia's security structure, especially through participation in NATO-led operations, such as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, where the Georgians had been as heavily committed as they had been in Iraq. Initially, Russia was criticized for the outbreak of war against Georgia, and relations between the West, NATO, and Russia

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<sup>183</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 80–81; Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 296.

<sup>184</sup>Stephen F. Szabo, *Germany, Russia and the Rise of Geo-Economics* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 28; Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 297.

were suspended. An independent commission came to the conclusion that Russia's account of the origins of the outbreak of war were true, and relations then recommenced, notably due to German behind-the-scenes political promotion.<sup>185</sup> Additionally, the Caucasus was somehow far away and loom less central to the theme of European security, and the Georgian war slipped into forgetfulness soon after it happened.

Wegren judged that President Putin, after his first two terms in office from 2000 to 2008, was not a "risk taker or a president prone to reckless action"<sup>186</sup> but was responsible for the concentration of power, for the rise of the *siloviki* (the men of the security branches, the intelligence services, and the military), which Putin recruited for the presidential administration, and for the resurgence of nationalist symbolism in favor of Russia's interests.<sup>187</sup> Moreover, in 2007–2008, the West endured a huge setback to its post-1989 forward momentum in its relations with Russia and the world economic crisis. In addition, the West had the perception of an increasingly aggressive Russia under Putin at the end of his first two terms, promoting exclusive interests at any cost to the West, in regards to blocking Kosovo's independence, NATO's plans for a missile defense system in Europe, or the invasion of Georgia, and usage of energy deliveries as instruments of threat; therefore, Dimitri Medvedev was seen as relief for a hopeful West when he became president in May 2008. The new Russian president aimed at modernizing the economy, countering corruption, and acquiring investments and technology from the West.<sup>188</sup>

In Germany, the presidential–prime-ministerial castling, as Putin became prime minister in 2008, resulted in a "Medvedev Effect," with the German public perception of Russia improving, which was supported by the US-Russian relations "reset" initiated by the new U.S. President Barack Obama in 2009, an event that was seen with much hope in Germany, whose citizens were at that time tired of the Bush administration and the Iraq disaster. In 2008, the Allensbach Institute found out that Germans were highly skeptical

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<sup>185</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 296–97.

<sup>186</sup>Wegren, *Return to Putin's Russia*, 11.

<sup>187</sup>Sakwa, "Political Leadership," 33.

<sup>188</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 33.

about the Russians because “only a quarter of Germans liked the Russians while 35 percent did not and 40 percent were undecided.”<sup>189</sup> This image of Russians improved under Medvedev, who had a much better personal relationship with the German chancellor. However, Medvedev was only the crown prince for Vladimir Putin, as the West, and especially Merkel, had to learn in 2012. Merkel assumed power amid an erosion of democratic civil culture in Russia, after Germany had hoped to work furthermore with Dimitry Medvedev rather than return to a Putin-Merkel relationship in German-Russian relations.<sup>190</sup> After facing a major financial and economic crisis that Medvedev handled, Putin promised a recovery of the Russian economy in 2012, when he retook the Office of the Russian President for his third term. The allegedly rigged presidential elections of 2012 resulted not only in a loss of Russian credibility in the Western world, but also in a significant reduction of substantive support, which isolated Putin’s regime more and more because it was also unable to rely on the emerging social classes in Russia: entrepreneurs, intelligentsia, and service workers.<sup>191</sup> Thus, even more so than during his first two terms, Putin relied on the cadres of *siloviki* and the power-oriented bureaucracy and security apparatus of government administration, which, to the shock and dismay of observers in the West, began to manifest more of the old bad habits.

With Putin’s return, critics in the West, who were dismayed by the drift to authoritarianism in Russia, increasingly questioned the special relationship that Russia and Germany had enjoyed. Running counter to the “modern Germany’s strongly antiauthoritarian political culture,”<sup>192</sup> the value and legitimacy of the German-Russian relations were challenged, even by the chancellor. The first signs of opposition in Russia were visible in 2012, when large demonstrations took place in the streets of Moscow against Putin and his allies. These demonstrations were more or less based on the model of the orange revolution that had brought change to Ukraine some years earlier, but even though it was considered the first time that the Russians had protested against Putin as

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<sup>189</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 19.

<sup>190</sup>Schöllgen, *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Von 1945*, 297–98.

<sup>191</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 19; Sakwa, “Political Leadership,” 39.

<sup>192</sup>Mankoff, “Relations with the European Union,” 285.

their leader, the opposition movement died down and became, due to increasingly strict regulations, non-relevant.<sup>193</sup> Currently, the Russian president enjoys an approval rating of 86 percent, as shown in recent polls. In this context and with regards to the stagnation or reversal of democratic development in Russia, German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle argued in 2013, with regards to German-Russian relations and *Ostpolitik*, that despite commonalities, “there are also differences and many observers currently believe that what divides us [Germany and Russia] is growing at a faster pace than what we have in common. We are concerned about the treatment of political opponents and civil society. . . . We aren’t ignoring these concerns and differences.”<sup>194</sup> These clear words resemble a change in tone to prior statements, as Germany has to balance constantly between the West and the East, between values and interests, according to Germany’s fate as a bridging state with a matured foreign policy based on its deep integration into the West—*Westbindung* and *Ostpolitik* revived.

German-Russian relations are manifold on all levels of society and government. Germany and Russia’s common history affects the way in which the people are perceived and how politicians make decisions. In the context of German-Russian relations, certain key events are important to note, beginning with the fact that Soviet sacrifices made in two world wars continued to affect the Soviets until 1990 Russia today, which commemorates the seventieth anniversary of Soviet victory.<sup>195</sup> The Cold War with Germany’s *Ostpolitik* and the German reunification are also key events, while parallel developments concerning Germany’s new beginning and the disintegration of the Soviet Union—and its domestic perception in Russia as defeat—is especially imperative to note. In this context, with regards to the Soviet short-term conditions of Germany’s reunification, Laird argues that “the Soviet leadership hoped to put in motion a long-term trend—the emergence of Germany as a lobby within Europe for the Soviet Union.”<sup>196</sup> Wettig points out that, during the Cold War, “the Soviet leaders have always found an

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<sup>193</sup>Wegren, *Return to Putin’s Russia*, 2.

<sup>194</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 30.

<sup>195</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 34.

<sup>196</sup>Laird, *Soviets, Germany, and the New Europe*, 206.

understanding partner in the West German Government . . . [and] Bonn has never ceased, even when it did not particularly suit the Soviet policy makers, in its endeavors to pave the way for the widest possible political dialogue between the countries of the West and those of the East,”<sup>197</sup> a *leitmotif* even after reunification. Thus, Germany was in a more prominent position in regards to Russia, and enjoying a special relationship.

German-Russian relations, however, have always been ambiguous and wavelike, misinterpreted often, but restrained by the fact that Germany and Russia are both part of continental Europe. It should not be underestimated that “intimacy, however, may breed not only on friendship, but also contempt or open hostility. Russia has had friends and partisans in Germany, but also bitter enemies,”<sup>198</sup> or, as Szabo puts it, “proximity remains both a problem and an opportunity.”<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>197</sup>Gerhard Wettig, “Germany, Europe, and the Soviets,” in Herbert J. Ellison (ed.), *Soviet Policy toward Western Europe: Implications for the Atlantic Alliance* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1982), 59.

<sup>198</sup>Laquer, *Russia and Germany*, 38.

<sup>199</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 15.

### III. GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY

Since Germany's reunification in 1990 and the end of the Cold War, the global security environment has changed dramatically, and with it has transformed the theory and practice of international relations. With technological advances and the widespread effects of globalization (that is, the process of increased global, transnational and transcultural communication, and commerce in all realms affecting people's daily life), the execution of foreign policy has become much more complicated.<sup>200</sup> Since 1989, the international system of states has shifted profoundly and today is prone, once again, to the constant shifting of national power and influence, which has lately (2014) been more than evident. These shifts determine the position of a nation state within the global system or its ability to assert its interests and sovereignty.

Foreign policy execution is the nation state's instrument to ensure its vital interests and values—survival, security and prosperity—in the constant competition with other nation states that has been going on since 1648, if not before. For Germany, this instrument underwent a diplomatic revolution after reunification in 1990. The reunited Germans had to learn to carry the burden of sovereignty, which comes along with enlarged responsibilities and growing expectations by allies and partners to do more while at the same time remaining within the boundaries of Germany's painful memory of the epoch of defeat in total war and the aftereffects on political culture. Germany's leading role and ability to shape international politics in Europe and beyond has developed during more than two decades after reunification. Germany has slowly regained power, economically as well as politically, partially by its deploying military force in a multilateral framework amid the turmoil that began in the early 1990s. The government in Berlin can now voice as well as strive for its national interests in a

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<sup>200</sup>Nayef Al-Rodhan and Gérard Stoudmann, Director of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, defined *globalization* in a wide spectrum as “a process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities.” See Nayef Al-Rodhan and Gérard Stoudmann, “Definitions of Globalization: A Comprehensive Overview and a Proposed Definition,” Geneva, Suisse: Geneva Centre for Security Policy, June 19, 2006, 5, [http://www.academia.edu/2969717/Definitions\\_of\\_Globalization\\_A\\_Comprehensive\\_Overview\\_and\\_a\\_Proposed\\_Definition-The\\_International\\_Relations\\_and\\_Security\\_Network\\_ETH\\_Zurich\\_June\\_19\\_2006](http://www.academia.edu/2969717/Definitions_of_Globalization_A_Comprehensive_Overview_and_a_Proposed_Definition-The_International_Relations_and_Security_Network_ETH_Zurich_June_19_2006).

globalized world, an upshot that signifies a normalization of foreign politics for a sovereign nation. However, with its geographical position in Central Europe, its defeat in two world wars, its national division during the Cold War, its post-heroic society and declared “normality”<sup>201</sup> foreign policy decision-making in Berlin is complex and not often fully understood in Germany or among its partners.

Too many today forget Germany’s geopolitical situation of being a nation in between, a fact that has historically contributed to Germany’s special path to nationhood. This path has and has not diverged from that of Germany’s western neighbors, who became national enemies, with tragic results, including repeated attempts by Germany to dominate Europe by force of arms, attempts which ended in horrible failure. National division was the result, in which the two German states had to manage the Cold War system of states to their respective interests amid the ebb and flow of the US-Soviet confrontation, as mentioned in Chapter II. German foreign policy since unification is deeply conscious of these facts, which are too easily forgotten in the confusion of the twenty-first century, where historical memory is either too short or simply non-existent.

With the US’s pivot to Asia’s and Germany’s growing role in European politics in the wake of the 2008 world economic crisis, and with the forward march of globalization, one must understand the process of how Germany’s foreign policy became a reality, of the essential stakeholders, and of the domestic influences that shaped Germany’s policy, as directed by the *Bundeskanzleramt* and the Federal Foreign Office. Only with these essentials can one understand Germany’s relationship with Russia. Besides governmental stakeholders, foreign policy is influenced by public opinion with regards to domestic decisions, as well as by such special interest groups as the *Ostausschuss der Deutschen Wirtschaft* (the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations), which strongly promotes German-Russian relations and opposes the sanction regime introduced in 2014 after the Crimean annexation. Nevertheless, even the *Ostausschuss* had to acknowledge that German-Russian relations have undergone a negative trend, with 56 percent of all responding businesses in Germany predicting a negative development in Russia in a

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<sup>201</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 53. (Chancellor Schroeder explained the Kosovo intervention in 1999 with Germany’s responsibilities “as a normal ally”).



recent opinion poll, as happened in 2013 when the German-Russian business climate index had fallen comparative to 2012.<sup>202</sup> This fact severely undermines a core pillar of German-Russian relations and has an impact on Germany's Russia policy.

German foreign policy must be understood in the historical realms of the nation's past, as well as in the context of its profound European interdependence, of which Chapter II provides a basic overview with focus on Germany and Russia. While a purely theoretical explanation based on the body of international relations theory does not sufficiently explain German foreign policy formation—the structures, dominant stakeholders, motives, procedures, and influences—a theoretical approach on terms and ideas of foreign policy is inevitable. This chapter initially provides a brief theoretical background on foreign policy formation, its stakeholders and powers, interests, and identity in the framework of international relations in order to understand foreign policy. These theoretical essentials elaborate on governmental decision-making in German foreign policy while explicitly addressing such main actors as the *Bundeskanzleramt*, the *Auswaertiges Amt* (Federal Foreign Office) and the *Bundestag* (parliament) before outlining the parameters of contemporary German foreign policy and an analysis of Germany's Russia policy. The chapter closes with a discussion of the role of civil society in foreign policy and includes non-governmental stakeholders, such as media and think tanks in Germany, as well as German-Russian interest groups, such as the *Ostausschuss* of the German economy.

## A. UNDERSTANDING FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy, as part of international relations or world politics, has been extensively researched and theoretically founded for more than a century, if not longer. A theory's objective is to explain and simplify reality in order to understand the processes, be able to contribute an answer to contemporary questions, and provide solutions; however, as Waltz emphasizes in the remits of international politics, "a theory . . . always

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<sup>202</sup>Ostausschuss der Deutschen Wirtschaft [Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations] and German-Russian Chamber of Commerce, "Business Climate Index Russia 2014," January 29, 2014, <http://www.ost-ausschuss.de/gesch-ftsklima-russland-eingetr-bt>.

remains distinct from that world [reality].”<sup>203</sup> Three main perspectives prevail in theories of international relations—realism, liberalism, and constructivism—while the realist paradigm has had the most influence amongst scholars and their approach to world politics so far.<sup>204</sup> Notwithstanding that other, especially constructivist, approaches have gained explanatory significance since the end of the Cold War with the furthering democracy and multilateral institutions, this section does not go into detail on the differentiation of theories of international relations; rather, it aims to provide a theoretical background on foreign policy formation in general. Acknowledging the fact that foreign policy formation does not take place in a vacuum leads to the assumption that, if the respective international relations environment changes, then so does the policy formation and, accordingly, its explanatory theory. German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier summarized the situation during his newest term in office in 2013: “My office is the same, but the world is not. . . . Crises have moved closer to European borders.”<sup>205</sup> In regards to Europe’s current state of affairs in the years 2014–2015, a return to realist approaches, where the struggle for power and survival is central, is likely to resurface in the face of a Russian threat to Europe’s eastern border and the post-1989 European order of states.

## 1. Essentials on Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is generally understood as the entirety of state activity undertaken to realize the state’s interests concerning its power, economy, culture, and above all security vis-à-vis its international partners and neighbors. Consequently, political scientist Helga Haftendorn, a leading scholar of West German foreign policy during the Cold War, defined foreign policy “as a process of interaction in which the states try to realize their goals and interests in competition with other states.”<sup>206</sup> Jaeger and

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<sup>203</sup>Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 2010), 6.

<sup>204</sup>Glenn Hastedt and Kay Knickrehm, eds. *Toward the Twenty-First Century: A Reader in World Politics* (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994), 5.

<sup>205</sup> Frank-Walter Steinmeier, “We Are Rightly Expected to Become Involved,” *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* [South German Newspaper], January 30, 2014, [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Infoservice/Presse/Interview/2014/140130-BM\\_SZ.html?nn=599884](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Infoservice/Presse/Interview/2014/140130-BM_SZ.html?nn=599884).

<sup>206</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 4.

Beckmann added the organizational aspect by defining foreign policy as the implementation with regards to contents and organizational regulation of the relations of a state-centered society to its environment.<sup>207</sup> Henry Kissinger offered a more traditional and simple approach, assuming that if a domestic system and its policy is stable, then “foreign policy begins where domestic policy ends,”<sup>208</sup> a corollary to Moltke’s idea as to the relationship of war to politics. Kissinger’s distinction also implies that domestic goals and international goals are separate, which was true for past centuries, but today, due to increased globalization and its transnational relevance, the distinction between foreign policy goals and domestic policy goals is rapidly disappearing.<sup>209</sup> While transnationalization reaches back as far as the Westphalian system of 1648 and the five great powers that became heirs to this new order in the wake of wars of religion, the effects of globalization are unprecedented in their sweep and breadth (e.g., significant technological progress). There has also been a significant change in the face of war and the nature of weapons, which poses a challenge for German foreign policy in keeping the technological standard of its military capabilities, which have suffered from decades of under-investment in the peace dividend from 1989.<sup>210</sup>

The two main factors that determine foreign policy are the internal and external factors that affect foreign policy formation. While internal factors are societal preconditions, preferences, or specific decisions made in connection with domestic issues within the country, external factors are the stimuli that foreign nation’s actions generate on the system.<sup>211</sup> The dynamic linkage between the external and the internal factors require decision-makers to engage continuously in two-sided considerations when

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<sup>207</sup>Thomas Jäger and Rasmus Beckmann, “Die internationalen Rahmenbedingungen der Aussenpolitik” [The international conditions of foreign policy] in Thomas Jäger et al., eds., *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen* [German foreign policy: Security, welfare, institutions, and norms] (Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 16.

<sup>208</sup>Henry A. Kissinger, “Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy,” *Daedalus* 95, no. 2 (Spring 1966), 503, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20026982>.

<sup>209</sup>Hastedt and Knickrehm, *Toward the Twenty-First Century*, 147.

<sup>210</sup>Jäger and Beckmann, “Die internationalen,” 25.

<sup>211</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 17.

making foreign policy decisions, probably leading to foreign policy change in the respective country.

While change or adaption is a constant character of governmental foreign policy, it is necessary to understand the extent to which foreign policy change is undertaken, as one nation's change in foreign policy will always have consequences for other countries, forcing them to adapt or change their foreign policy. In this regard, Hermann defines four levels of change in foreign policy for theoretical classification: (1) adjustment change, which adjusts the level of effort or widens the scope of recipients while retaining procedures and objectives; (2) program change, which affects the methods and instruments; thus, procedures change while retaining objectives; (3) problem/goal change, which changes the overall objective and replaces it; and (4) international-orientation change, which changes the entirety of a nation's foreign policy approach.<sup>212</sup> The factors that determine and influence a foreign policy change are multidimensional. Although the degree of institutionalization and the support of actors affect change, the domestic significance of an issue also influences the likelihood of foreign policy change. Hermann explicitly stated that "restructuring or transforming the economic system also can be a source of foreign policy change."<sup>213</sup> Based on the definition of foreign policy, Hermann proposes a seven-stage decision process a government goes through to change its foreign policy<sup>214</sup>:

1. Initial policy expectations
2. External actor/ environmental stimuli
3. Recognition of discrepant information
4. Postulation of a connection between problem and policy
5. Development of alternatives
6. Authoritative consensus for choice
7. Implementation of new policy

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<sup>212</sup>Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (March 1990), 5–6.

<sup>213</sup>Hermann, "Changing Course," 7.

<sup>214</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

## 2. Stakeholders of Foreign Policy

In the international system, the units (states) interact with one another without a higher authority because “the prominent characteristic of international politics . . . seems to be the lack of order and of organization,”<sup>215</sup> which Waltz describes as anarchy. This idea implies that the states also define the order of international politics through their interactions. Although the international system constitutes the environment in which foreign policy takes place, it is the different actors that execute foreign policy. In Waltz’s realist approach, nation states are units on the same level because, even though each sovereign state varies widely in size, power, capabilities, wealth, and form, they all face the same tasks, though they may not have identical abilities to execute them.<sup>216</sup>

Gareis concludes that, despite the rise of non-governmental organizations in international politics or intergovernmental organizations such as the European Union, the nation state remains the dominant actor in the international system.<sup>217</sup> Based on the Westphalian system in the epoch from 1648 until 1815, a European rational-bureaucratic state developed and, confined to its territory, became the authorized actor on the international stage, actions described as *Staatskunst* (statecraft) to assure and safeguard power and territorial integrity through diplomacy, alliances, or military actions.<sup>218</sup> In the classical sense of the era from approximately 1740 until the 1880s, the term *state* encompassed, in addition to government, society, which was politically diverse according to the prevailing regime, and the national territory. In most democratic systems, *Staatskunst* is performed by what was formerly a small circle of government officials and cabinets by the political leadership, as outlined in the constitution.<sup>219</sup> Within the government, it is predominantly the executive branch that determines foreign policy and is responsible for it, while, in former times, parliaments usually did not have any substantial influence in shaping foreign policy besides their parliamentary control rights

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<sup>215</sup>Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 89.

<sup>216</sup>Ibid., 96.

<sup>217</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 16.

<sup>218</sup>Andreas Wilhelm, *Außenpolitik: Grundlagen, Strukturen und Prozesse* [Foreign policy: Basics, structures, and procedures] (Munich, Germany: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2006), 79.

<sup>219</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 18.

and the power of the purse. This fact especially applied to Germany in prior to 1945 when the strength of the legislative versus the executive was either non-existent or very weak indeed (e.g., during the first German Republic).

Among the broad spectrum of structures in executive branches, the power to shape and decide foreign policy resides with but a few power centers within the executive branch.<sup>220</sup> Personalizing the power centers, foreign policy is formed, decided, and executed by the head of state and government—in Germany, the *Bundeskanzlerin*, as well as the minister of foreign affairs and the minister of defense,—supplemented by such additional ministries as economics or development and trade, as well as small advisory circles.<sup>221</sup> Thus, the governmental top-level executives act on behalf of the nation state and represent the state as an actor in international politics.<sup>222</sup> With the systemic relevance of governmental top-level executives in foreign policy, the personal attitudes and characteristics of decision-makers are of importance. However, the actual level of power differs depending on the established political system with restraints in a democracy, such as coalition agreements or separation of powers with checks and balances, compared to an authoritarian, dictatorial system, where a small circle of decision-makers could enjoy nearly unlimited power.

In the contemporary international system, states are not the only actors, although they remain the dominant players. Contributing to and participating in international relations are also such international governmental organizations as the UN or regionally defined EU, OSCE or NATO and their subunits, as well as such non-governmental organizations as the International Committee of the Red Cross or Doctors without Borders. In addition, private actors, such as large transnational corporations (e.g., Google, Gazprom), or even private persons like the co-founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates, or terrorist groups and groups of organized crime, are increasingly exerting influence at the international level.<sup>223</sup> These international relations, or external relations, are formally

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<sup>220</sup>Wilhelm, *Außenpolitik*, 86.

<sup>221</sup>Ibid.

<sup>222</sup>Ibid.

<sup>223</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 25–27.

separate to foreign policy but could be part of it, ideally the aim at achieving the same objectives as the governmental executive branch.<sup>224</sup>

### 3. Power, Interests, and Identity

In the disorder of the international system, states aspire towards hegemony to be able to pursue their interests and dictate their norms and values for the international system, which is possible only if the state is powerful enough to prevail.<sup>225</sup> However, any power projection automatically leads to countervailing power because states are in a constant struggle. In order to survive in a realist understanding and to safeguard against any external aggression, power—often expressed as military, economic, financial, cultural, or technological power—is the relevant factor.<sup>226</sup> Max Weber defined *power* as taking advantage of every chance to get one's way in a social relation, even against resistance.<sup>227</sup> According to Weber's perspective, states are in constant relation to each other; thus, power is expressed in the ability of one state to persuade another state to act in such a way that the state would not have acted otherwise. Consequently, in the anarchic system of international relations, power is the ability to assert the state's objectives and interests against competing interests to the benefit of the state.<sup>228</sup>

The father of modern U.S. realism theory, Hans Morgenthau, argues a realist perspective such that each state seeks maximum power according to his concept of interest defined in terms of power; however, adjacent theories usually define more than one interest.<sup>229</sup> If foreign policy is generally understood as the entirety of state activity undertaken to realize the state's interests, then a state needs to define its interests, or at least its guiding principles, such as values and norms. Therefore, Wilhelm concluded that perception and implementation of the state's own interests vis-à-vis its environment,

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<sup>224</sup>Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Karl Kaiser, eds., *Germany's New Foreign Policy: Decision-Making in an Interdependent World* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 4.

<sup>225</sup>Jäger and Beckmann, "Die internationalen," 33.

<sup>226</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 28.

<sup>227</sup>Wilhelm, *Außenpolitik*, 96.

<sup>228</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup>Hastedt and Knickrehm, *Toward the Twenty-First Century*, 9.

becomes the main subject for foreign policy relations; hence, the actors will behave purposively.<sup>230</sup> National interest can also be influenced by ideology or history, as evidenced by the Federal German case with regards to *Westbindung* from 1949 onwards, or by Russia's national interests with regards to retaining an alleged superpower status in the present and recent past despite the collapse of the USSR in 1991. In this context, foreign policy is the manifestation of the state's means-ends relation in order to pursue the objectives as defined in interests.

The national identity of a state plays an important role in foreign policy because it defines the self-perception of a nation state and thus influences foreign policy formation and its underlying interests. National identity can force national interests and foreign policies to change when the national identity and proclaimed foreign policy interests collide. Bloom argues that if the population generally identifies with the nation, as should be the case in a contemporary democratic nation state, then a tendency amongst citizens evolves to defend or to enhance the shared national identity, which means that “the mass national public will mobilize when it perceives either that national identity is threatened, or that there is the opportunity of enhancing national identity.”<sup>231</sup> This implies, according to Bloom, that “the state, in terms of its foreign policy decisions, may trigger, manipulate, appropriate—or be manipulated by—the national identity dynamic.”<sup>232</sup>

## **B. GOVERNMENTAL DECISION-MAKING IN GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY**

Germany's international political position—its national and international parameters of foreign policy and conditions, as well as the expectations to act—have changed significantly overnight, when, on October 3, 1990, Germany reunited and became a sovereign nation, free of formal occupational oversight by the victors of World War II. Yet the institutions of national policy remained essentially the same, as these had been crafted in the years 1948–1949 in the rubble of defeat and attained their strength in

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<sup>230</sup>Wilhelm, *Außenpolitik*, 9.

<sup>231</sup>William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity, and International Relation* (New York: Cambridge University, 1990), 79.

<sup>232</sup>*Ibid.*, 80.



the decades from 1949 until 1989. With the end of the Cold War, not only Germany's position has changed but also the situation of the European continent and the world order in turn. During the Cold War, Federal Germany's foreign policy was determined by the perception of the constant military threat in the East—beyond the “Iron Curtain”—while the objectives of Germany's foreign policy were the peaceful resolution of national division, the prevention of nuclear war, the perseverance of territorial integrity, and the perpetuation of hard-won political independence while firmly embedded in the Euro-Atlantic West.<sup>233</sup> To ensure these objectives and at the same time reassure its partners, Federal Germany engaged in multilateral institutional approaches, such as within NATO and its integrated military command structures or the European Union. The defeat in two world wars, the weak Republic of 1919–1933, and national division had long-defined Germany's semi-sovereignty until reunification in 1990. For a very long time, these conditions set the distinctive characteristics of German foreign policy, which led West Germany to adopt a foreign policy role for what became later known as a *civilian power* “committed to deepening European and transatlantic integration, enhancing cooperative and multilateral conflict resolution, and resorting to force only as a last resort—and strictly within the framework of the United Nations.”<sup>234</sup> Such an idea, made popular after 1990, and especially after 2001, could mark a special German path distinction from the British and French, to say nothing of Americans and the Russians, all of whom were less reluctant to use military power in their national interests. The integration into a sovereignty that limited the regimes of multilateral approaches was for West Germany, and then for a united Germany, the *modus operandi* for its foreign policy during the Cold War. The best means of overcoming the legacy of defeat was the path not really taken by German statesmen either before 1914 (*Schaukelpolitik*) or aside from Locarno in 1925, that is, a firm grounding of Germany in collective security and collective defense as these institutions emerged through the 1960s within the international system of the Cold War.

Moreover, *multilateralism* became the core idea of German Foreign Policy, which Gareis defines as a pattern of action in which the actors assure one another to orientate

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<sup>233</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 20.

<sup>234</sup>Hanns W. Maull, ed. *Germany's Uncertain Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 3.

their foreign policy behavior according to common norms and regulations, and to do so even if that meant following regulations and norms not in-line with their objectives and interests.<sup>235</sup> With respect to Germany's apparently weak power in May 1949 and with the foundation of the FRG, a multilateral approach was the most promising way to regain international acceptance and influence, but also to show the world that West Germany could be trusted again.<sup>236</sup> This policy assured the survival of the new FRG in the blast of the Cold War; united the French and West Germans via the Saar, Ruhr, and Lorraine industrial regions; laid the foundation for a common market; and secured the role of the U.S. as a balancer to the UK and France, who otherwise might drift away from Central Europe. The policy also assured prosperity, which, with the security of NATO, allowed West German democracy to consolidate in a way that had not been possible in the 1920s. Germany's multilateralism became manifested in the country's foreign policy maxim "'Never alone' and 'never again'"<sup>237</sup> This *leitmotif* had been broadly embedded in the German public during the Cold War, and is still valid, even twenty-five years after reunification.

Eberwein und Kaiser argue that a successful "foreign policy must be based on a broad public consensus . . . as many [foreign policy] decisions today have repercussions for both foreign and domestic policy."<sup>238</sup> Among united German society and its governmental elites, a strong reservation against the assumption of new tasks and responsibilities in the area of foreign and security policy manifested itself, based on experience with Germany's unilateral approaches in the twentieth century. Thus, the critical public thoroughly scrutinizes every foreign policy decision in Germany, especially in the remits of usage of military force, in politics, population, and media along the lines of Germany's foreign policy culture.<sup>239</sup> This phenomenon was present at the creation of the *Bundeswehr* with the decade-long fight in domestic politics over what

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<sup>235</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 60.

<sup>236</sup>Ibid.

<sup>237</sup>Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 1.

<sup>238</sup>Eberwein and Kaiser, *Germany's New Foreign Policy*, 6–7.

<sup>239</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 61.

was called “rearmament,” but the argument was really about the foundation of an army in a democracy integrated into an alliance. Foreign policy culture can be understood as the “‘totality of the historically grown, (foreign) politically important, and over time relatively stable attitudes and modes of behavior of society’ vis-à-vis foreign policy.”<sup>240</sup> The foreign policy culture in post–World War II Germany has been shaped “by the experiences of National Socialism, war, and defeat,”<sup>241</sup> and consolidated itself in the concept of “civilian power” among the political elites and broader population. At the same time, the FRG built up its military forces and discussed the use of nuclear weapons as part of NATO’s Strategic Concept MC 14/3 during the Cold War from 1968 on—hardly the instruments of a civilian power. However, the political culture the concept of civilian power (peaceful conflict resolution and cooperation), and its subsequent foreign policy identity of multilateral engagement is still valid today. Maull and Risse, among others, argue that after reunification in 1990, Germany’s foreign policy followed a path of continuity, and relevant changes happened slowly and in small steps with the employment of instruments, such as the *Bundeswehr*, while the overall concept of civilian power remained in place and is the basis of Germany’s strategic culture when seen in contrast to other great powers, especially since 2001.<sup>242</sup>

In light of the growing complexity of foreign policy formation in the last decade (with the growing intensity of crises), an overall coherent and transparent guiding strategy defining national interests and foreign policy values is still missing in Germany. One looks in vain for an account of the policies and instruments required for the coherent implementation that is rooted in accepted societal and political preferences. The soon-to-be revised *Weißbuch* (White Book) on security policy and the future of the *Bundeswehr* from the year 2006, is the responsibility of the Ministry of Defense, with the participation of the other governmental resorts. Along with Germany’s partners, society and academic

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<sup>240</sup>August Pradetto, “The Polity of German Foreign Policy,” in *Germany’s Uncertain Power*, ed. Hanns W. Maull (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 21.

<sup>241</sup>Ibid.

<sup>242</sup>Pradetto, “The Polity of German Foreign Policy,” 21–22; Thomas Risse, “Kontinuität durch Wandel: Eine ‘neue’ deutsche Außenpolitik?” [Continuity through change: A “new” German foreign policy], *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* [From politics and history] B11 (2004), 31, <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/28465/kontinuitaet-durch-wandel-eine-neue-deutsche-aussenpolitik?p=all>.

circles explain the role of the *Bundeswehr*, its *raison d'être*, and its capabilities.<sup>243</sup> In contrast with somewhat similar documents in the UK or the United States, this work is especially significant, even if it receives far less attention than it deserves. Germany's foreign policy is rooted in these decentralized and federal structures of the political system, including its society. Thus, knowledge about the role of the main foreign policy actors of the federal German government helps one understand the formation of German foreign policy and its limits. Such knowledge, however, is often suffocated in partisan political debates, and extreme political positions arise from the unhappy legacy of the age of total war and especially its effects on domestic politics.

### **1. Role of the *Bundeskanzleramt* and Ministerial Authority**

The Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (the *Grundgesetz*) as the constitution, provides the federal government, in Article 32, with the primacy of foreign policy, stating, "Relations with foreign states shall be conducted by the Federation."<sup>244</sup> In addition, in Article 73, the Basic Law foresees exclusive legislative power for the federation in matters of foreign affairs, thus giving the federal government the main responsibility for the formation and execution of German foreign policy.<sup>245</sup> Among the different ministries and agencies on the federal level, the traditional institutions of foreign policy in Germany—the Federal Chancellery, the Federal Foreign Office, and the Federal Ministry of Defense—are the main actors. Their interactions and the formation of policy are guided by several principles. First, the principle of chancellor authority, which, according to Article 65 of the Basic Law, gives the Chancellor the power to "determine and be responsible for the general guidelines of policy,"<sup>246</sup> and thus enables the dominant

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<sup>243</sup>Additional information on the German White Book process is available at [http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/lut/p/c4/04\\_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP3I5EyrpHK9pNyydL3y1Mzi4qTS5Az9gmxHROBg2ftX/](http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/lut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP3I5EyrpHK9pNyydL3y1Mzi4qTS5Az9gmxHROBg2ftX/).

<sup>244</sup>Bundesministerium der Justiz und fuer Verbraucherschutz [Federal German Ministry of Justice and Customer Rights], "Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany in the revised version published in the Federal Law Gazette last amended by the Act of 11 July 2012," in *Federal Law Gazette I*, 2012 no. 32, 16 July 2012), article 32. Available at [http://www.gesetze-im-Internet.de/englisch\\_gg/englisch\\_gg.html#p0107](http://www.gesetze-im-Internet.de/englisch_gg/englisch_gg.html#p0107).

<sup>245</sup>Bundesministerium der Justiz und fuer Verbraucherschutz [Federal German Ministry of Justice and Customer Rights], "Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany," *Federal Law Gazette I*, no. 32 (July 16, 2012) 1; Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen*, 36.

<sup>246</sup>*Ibid.*, Article 65.

position of the chancellor in the federal government. The dominant role of the Chancellor is supplemented with the principle of ministerial authority, which explains that “each Federal Minister shall conduct the affairs of his department independently and on his own responsibility. The Federal Government shall resolve differences of opinion between Federal Ministers.”<sup>247</sup> A strong position in governmental decision-making is held by the cabinet, which is composed of the chancellor and the federal ministers and which is responsible for all relevant matters of foreign and domestic policy, and among whom contentious issues are discussed, which is understood as the principle duty of cabinet authority. It is worth mentioning that most of the decisions are not being prepared in the collegial body of the cabinet but in consultative political sub-bodies of the cabinet, where only those who have an interest in the topic are involved.<sup>248</sup> The practice of these principles, based on the Basic Law, gives the executive branch a strong position, which has been confirmed by the Federal Constitutional Court multiple times.<sup>249</sup> With two exceptions in 1960 and in 1982, Germany has always had coalition governments of the leading parties from left center, to center, to right center since the first Adenauer cabinet from September 20, 1949, until present. This fact affects the decision-making process within the federal government significantly. The coalition principle affects all other principles like an overarching superstructure, as federal governmental policy decisions need to take into account the diverging interests and positions of more than one political party.

The *Bundeskanzleramt* (federal chancellery) supports the chancellor in performing constitutional duties while acting as head of the federal government and is thus an import steering and coordinating body interlining the implementation of the principles of chancellor, ministerial, and cabinet authority. In the first years of the FRG, all power was concentrated in this office, and slowly, in the 1950s, the FRG regained the

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<sup>247</sup>Bundesministerium der Justiz und fuer Verbraucherschutz, Article 65.

<sup>248</sup>Kai Oppermann and Alexander Hoese, “Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen deutscher Aussenpolitik” [Domestic restrictions of German foreign policy], in *Deutsche Außenpolitik: Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen* [German foreign policy: Security, welfare, institutions, and norms], ed. Thomas Jäger et al. (Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 46.

<sup>249</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 41.

tools of statecraft and the personnel to go with such policy. The chancellery needs to have oversight and expertise knowledge of all relevant ministerial and governmental plans and actions in order to educate the chancellor at any given time and ensure a coherent and unified position of the German government. Therefore, the *Bundeskanzleramt's* departmental structure is a mirror of the various federal ministries—as is the case in the other leading western democracies—enabling the *Bundeskanzleramt* to be “geared to coordinating issues falling within the area of more than one ministry.”<sup>250</sup> Within the departmental structure, the 2nd directorate-general has the responsibility to prepare and coordinate all matters regarding foreign policy, which includes defense and security policy. The directorate-general is manned mainly by experts, diplomats, and officers from the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defense, while the head of the 2nd directorate-general—usually a senior diplomat from the Foreign Office—is the chancellor’s foreign policy advisor.<sup>251</sup> The *Bundessicherheitsrat* (Federal Security Council) is located within the 2nd directorate-general, also one of the cabinet’s political sub-bodies. The Federal Security Council meets secretly and consists of the chancellor, and the ministers of foreign affairs, defense, interior, finance, justice, economic affairs, and development aid, as well as the head of the office of the chancellery; in addition, the chief of defense and the government spokesperson have advisory seats.<sup>252</sup> However, the Federal Security Council has lost significance in that, presently, it deals mainly with arms exports, while important foreign-policy decisions are made in smaller, more informal circles, which consist of at least the chancellor, the head of the office of the chancellery, and the ministers of foreign affairs, defense, and interior.<sup>253</sup>

Keeping in mind the authority of the chancellor, the definition of the general foreign policy guidelines, the limitations of power in favor of the ministries responsibilities, and the available resources within the *Bundeskanzleramt*, the chancellery

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<sup>250</sup>Judith Siwert-Probst, “Traditional Institutions of Foreign Policy,” in *Germany’s New Foreign Policy: Decision-Making in an Interdependent World*, eds. Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Karl Kaiser (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 22.

<sup>251</sup>Oppermann and Hoese, “Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen,” 48.

<sup>252</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 39.

<sup>253</sup>Oppermann and Hoese, “Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen,” 47.

relies on the specialized ministries. Foremost of these entities is the Federal Foreign Office. In this regard, Siwert-Probst summarizes the main task of the chancellery as one “to co-ordinate points of view by maintaining the closest possible contact with ministries . . . to recognize and reconcile differences of opinion in good time and . . . whenever necessary, reiterate the chancellor’s stated guidelines.”<sup>254</sup>

## **2. The Federal Foreign Office and Primacy of Foreign Affairs**

While the traditional institutions of foreign policy are still the dominant actors in Germany’s foreign policy formation, the number of other specialized ministries engaged in international, bilateral, or multilateral relations in favor of German interests has grown significantly in light of globalization, trans-nationalization, and the end of the Cold War.<sup>255</sup> Moreover, because of the federal structure at the heart of government, foreign relations are nurtured not only on the federal level, but also on the state level. The State of Bavaria, for example, maintains a network of international representative offices in twenty-three countries across the globe in view of its own particularistic heritage, but also because German aerospace, as well as such firms as Audi and BMW, have a significant world presence. While this fragmentation of foreign policy strengthens the role of the chancellor, it poses a challenge to the Federal Foreign Office and the traditional primacy in foreign affairs, which is characteristic of how foreign relations have changed from the time of Metternich and Bismarck until the present. In this context, the difference between foreign relations and foreign policy is important, as the latter is ideally the coherent implementation of defined national goals and interests in competition with other states. Andrea and Kaiser argue that, with the increase in foreign relations of specialized ministries and their relevance for the foreign policy interests, “each specialized ministry has de facto become a foreign ministry for its respective sphere of competence.”<sup>256</sup> Hence, the question of whether the primacy of foreign affairs still resides mainly with the Foreign Office needs to be addressed.

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<sup>254</sup>Siwert-Probst, “Traditional Institutions of Foreign Policy,” 22.

<sup>255</sup>Eberwein and Kaiser, *Germany’s New Foreign Policy*, 4; Oppermann and Hoese, “Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen,” 47.

<sup>256</sup>Andreae and Kaiser, “The ‘Foreign Policies’ of Specialized Ministries,” 39.

The Foreign Office, under which the Foreign Service with its global network of embassies and consulates operates, is increasingly less capable of coordinating and guiding foreign policy in all aspects. This ministry has thus developed into a cross-sectional body that shares expertise and interacts with other specialized ministries.<sup>257</sup> To enhance its expertise and to take into account the wide spectrum of foreign relations, which affect foreign policy, more than 25 percent of personnel at Germany's embassies and consulates are not diplomats from the Foreign Service but officials from other federal ministries.<sup>258</sup> In 2001, Andreae and Kaiser stated that the primacy of foreign policy still rests with the Foreign Office, Oppermann and Hoese believed in 2007 that only in the realms of peace- and security policy, policy in the UN, and policy concerning Germany's engagement in the multilateral alliances or organizations (as well as concerning armaments verification and armaments export, human rights, and international law) does the Foreign Office still hold the central responsibility.<sup>259</sup> However, the position of the foreign minister hinges on the primacy of foreign affairs for the Foreign Office. Without this primacy in the cabinet, no unified German position can be put in hand. The procedural rules of the federal government—as with other nations—foresee that only after having contacted and informed the Foreign Office may a representative of a foreign country be received, and all negotiations with other countries may be conducted only with the approval of the Federal Foreign Office, which can decide to participate in any negotiations.<sup>260</sup>

Regarding the central authority of the chancellor in the cabinet and the fragmentation of foreign policy among multiple actors on multiple levels, Siwert-Probst comments that “foreign policy is ‘managed’ or ‘administered’ rather than ‘formulated’ by the Foreign Office.”<sup>261</sup> Much of the setting of priorities and the power in foreign policy

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<sup>257</sup>Oppermann and Hoese, “Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen,” 49; Andreae and Kaiser, “The ‘Foreign Policies’ of Specialized Ministries,” 40; Siwert-Probst, “Traditional Institutions of Foreign Policy,” 33.

<sup>258</sup>Oppermann and Hoese, “Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen,” 49.

<sup>259</sup>Andreae and Kaiser, “The ‘Foreign Policies’ of Specialized Ministries,” 46; Oppermann and Hoese, “Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen,” 49.

<sup>260</sup>Siwert-Probst, “Traditional Institutions of Foreign Policy,” 27.

<sup>261</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.



formation rests on experience and personal leadership characteristics of the chancellor and the foreign minister together, while “the Foreign Minister remains fundamentally responsible for German foreign policy.”<sup>262</sup>

In Germany’s coalition governments, the junior partner in the cabinet and in parliament designates the foreign minister. Such was true in the 1960s and remains true today. Currently, Frank-Walter Steinmeier from the Socialist Party (SPD) is in his second term as foreign minister, having taken over the office from former Chancellor Schroeder from 2005 to 2009. He has not only expertise in foreign policy but also rich experience of a particular kind in view of the present crisis and its background. Upon arrival in the Foreign Office in December 2013, Steinmeier initiated a review of the Foreign Office and the Foreign Service (“Review 2014”), which was published in February 2015 with the concluding objective “to ensure Germany’s place as a leading European Nation that is willing to shoulder responsibility worldwide for a peaceful and free international order.”<sup>263</sup>

### **3. Parliament: The Role of German *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat* in Foreign Policy**

The executive branch of the government has a strong position in foreign policy decision-making, while the legislative branch—the parliament (*Bundestag*)—exerts its influence via the checks and balances: the parliamentary provisional rights. This institution distinguishes the Federal Republic of Germany and is prone to much misunderstanding in those nations unused to a parliamentary democracy (i.e., the United States). Usually the government and the parliamentary majority stem from the same party and are part of a coalition; thus, approval for foreign-policy decisions can proceed without friction.<sup>264</sup> While the responsibility for foreign policy rests with the federal government, the parliament has such specific powers as ratification of all international

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<sup>262</sup>Siwert-Probst, “Traditional Institutions of Foreign Policy,” 33.

<sup>263</sup>Federal Foreign Office, “Review 2014: A Fresh Look at Foreign Policy” (Berlin, Germany: Federal Foreign Office, 2015), 47, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/699442/publicationFile/202977/Schlussbericht.pdf>.

<sup>264</sup>Oppermann and Hoese, “Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen,” 51.

treaties and allocation of the federal budget for the ministries. In addition, a two-third parliamentary majority is required for all aspects where further transfer of sovereignty to the EU is foreseen.<sup>265</sup> The *Bundestag* and its members of parliament have no right of initiative in the remits of foreign policy and thus can accept or reject only the laws that are presented for parliamentary decision. Nevertheless, if the representation at the state level in the *Bundesrat* (the second parliamentary chamber in Germany) does not equal governmental majority representation, then the opposition can exert participatory control of the government's actions.<sup>266</sup>

The *Bundestag* has multiple non-legislative instruments of parliamentary control, which is especially useful for opposition in the parliament. The instruments include the possibility to cite members of the executive to testify before the *Bundestag* or its subcommittees to explain government policy or to set up committees of inquiry if 25 percent of the members of parliament agree to do so.<sup>267</sup> Concerning the deployment of the *Bundeswehr* and the 1950s–1980s dilemma between Article 87a and Article 24 of the Basic Law, the Federal Constitutional Court ruled on July 12, 1994, that a parliamentary decision needed to be taken on request by the government to engage militarily in the framework of multilateral institutions, the Article 24 interpretation of the mission of the *Bundeswehr*. Parliament has no rights to amend the request and initiatives. The *Bundestag* can only accept or deny the military deployment, which necessitates that government cooperate and inform the members of parliament, which also goes along the parliamentary groups.

In Germany, members of parliament usually focus on specific fields of expertise and normally remain in that domain throughout their political career. A foreign policy expertise is confined to certain members of the legislative who specialize in this field. In the *Bundestag*, it is the parliamentary groups (*Bundestagsfraktionen*) that coordinate the relevant positions amongst members of parliament, the party, and its leadership, and

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<sup>265</sup>Lothar Rühl, "Security Policy: National Structures and Multilateral Integration," in *Germany's New Foreign Policy: Decision-Making in an Interdependent World*, eds. Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Karl Kaiser (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 107.

<sup>266</sup>Oppermann and Hoese, "Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen," 51.

<sup>267</sup>*Ibid.*, 51–52.

whether the party is represented in the government, with the respective ministries.<sup>268</sup> This fact implies that when the government wants to pursue its foreign policy objectives successfully, it needs to coordinate with the parliament, while contentious issues in a coalition government will be dealt with via the coalition committee. A legislative period is four years; therefore, a certain fluctuation of members of parliament is common, which leads Ruehl to question the expertise of some members of parliament in light of the formal competencies of the *Bundestag*, “which often exhibits serious deficits.”<sup>269</sup> Consequently, in a democracy and not only limited to Germany, experts of specific topics, such as relations with Russia, are rare.

The 18th *Bundestag*, elected in September of 2013, consists of five political parties: the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its sister party the Christian Socialist Union (CSU), which form one parliamentary group; the Social Democratic Party (SPD); the Green Party; and the party *Die Linke*, the latter being the political successor of the former East German Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* [SED]). After having had a grand coalition with the SPD from 2005 to 2009, where Chancellor Merkel already worked with Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a coalition with the Free Liberal Party (FDP) from 2009 to 2013, Chancellor Merkel formed another grand coalition government with the SPD in 2013. While the party leader of the SPD, Sigmar Gabriel, who is also the vice chancellor, took over the Ministry of Economics and Technology, Frank-Walter Steinmeier once again took over the Federal Foreign Office.

Out of the twenty-three committees of the current legislative period, several permanent parliamentary committees are of significant relevance concerning foreign policy towards Russia, namely, the Committees on Affairs of the European Union, Budget, and Foreign Affairs. These committees, each which concentrates on its specialized area of policy, consist of the members of the five political parties according to their relative representation in the *Bundestag*. The committees confer on all bills and laws that might have an impact on their defined area of policy and attempt to find a majority

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<sup>268</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 35.

<sup>269</sup>Ruehl, “Security Policy,” 107.

decision before it gets admitted for vote to the plenary.<sup>270</sup> In addition, the German *Bundestag* entertains a variety of parliamentary groups engaged in international relations between the respective parliaments, such as the German-Russian Parliamentary Friendship Group, which is currently chaired by CDU Member of Parliament Bernhard Kaster, and which acts as a catalyst for dialogue between the Russian State Duma and the *Bundestag*.

The strong position of the executive versus the legislative branch in the realms of foreign policy has been confirmed multiple times by the Federal Constitutional Court.<sup>271</sup> However, in the public sphere and in the political decision-making process, the *Bundestag* and the *Bundesrat* are important actors in foreign affairs if it comes to governmental accountability, legitimization, and broad public support and understanding.

#### **4. “German Foreign Policy Is Peace Policy”—Norms, Interests, and Parameters**

Germany’s foreign relations and affairs unfold in a continental and global environment that has changed dramatically over the last twenty-five years. A diffuse, unpredictable, and increasingly unstable security environment, which affects Germany’s interests and parameters for foreign policy, has replaced the former bipolarity of the Cold War. In the past couple of years, in turn, the parameters of the 1990s have changed severely in the wake of the U.S. war on terror, the global economic crisis, and mounting security crises around and in Europe, as well as the shift of global power to Asia and away from the Euro-Atlantic axis.<sup>272</sup> After the publication of the results of Germany’s foreign policy review in 2014, the Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote that the gauges of German Foreign Policy “close partnership with France within a united Europe and a strong transatlantic alliance in terms of both security and economic co-operation—have withstood the test of time, and will remain a cornerstone of our approach,”<sup>273</sup> as they

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<sup>270</sup>German Bundestag, “Permanent Committees,” *German Bundestag*, accessed May 7, 2015, [http://www.bundestag.de/htdocs\\_e/bundestag/committees](http://www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/bundestag/committees).

<sup>271</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 41.

<sup>272</sup>Eberwein and Kaiser, *Germany’s New Foreign Policy*, 3.

<sup>273</sup>Frank-Walter Steinmeier, “The DNA of German Foreign Policy,” *Politico*, February 17, 2015, <http://www.politico.eu/other-voices/the-dna-of-german-foreign-policy/>.

have since 1949 when the FRG first formulated a foreign policy with the still occupation powers.

German foreign policy is rooted in the normative foundation of the Basic Law of 1949, which has stood the test of time in a remarkable way. Article 26 of the Basic Law obliges the federal government to ensure the maintenance of international peace at all costs and limits arms export, making any infringement an unconstitutional and thus criminal offense.<sup>274</sup> In order to cooperate and pursue multilateral approaches, Article 24 provides for the possibility to transfer sovereignty rights to international organizations in order to “bring about and secure a lasting peace in Europe and among the nations of the world.”<sup>275</sup> Lastly, the Basic Law binds all state authority to the universal acknowledgement and protection of human rights in Germany and abroad.<sup>276</sup> Based on these norms, the Federal Foreign Office stresses that “Germany’s foreign policy is value-oriented and interest-led . . . [while its] foreign policy agenda revolves around Europe, the transatlantic partnership, working for peace, new players and managing globalization.”<sup>277</sup>

Currently, one of the biggest beneficiaries of a free and global economic market—a characteristic of the current international system—Germany and its multilateral approach is based on accepting the rules, and acting within the constraints the international system yields success. And yet, such statecraft has well advanced German national interests, which itself have changed since unity in 1990 in the face of domestic and international forces. Economic development after reunification (that is, the imperative to modernize all of Germany amid the unification of Europe) and the advent of globalized capitalism has made Germany increasingly dependent on free trade, unrestricted exchange of people, material, ideas, and information with other nations,

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<sup>274</sup>Bundesministerium, “Basic Law,” article 26, no. 1, 2.

<sup>275</sup>Ibid., article 24, no. 1, 2.

<sup>276</sup>Ibid., article 1, no. 1, 2.

<sup>277</sup>Federal Foreign Office, “Germany’s Foreign Policy Parameters.” Foreign and European Policy, Federal Foreign Office, last updated March 28, 2013, [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/sid\\_5A6B6D6CAF043138C61E244C650CE6E7/EN/Aussenpolitik/Schwerpunkte\\_Aussenpolitik\\_node.html](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/sid_5A6B6D6CAF043138C61E244C650CE6E7/EN/Aussenpolitik/Schwerpunkte_Aussenpolitik_node.html).

including demand-driven access to other markets, and international trade routes. Therefore, Germany's primary interest is a status quo of a stable and secure environment of western-oriented values and institutions, which means "a strong Europe and a liberal, rule-based international order with free and open states and societies. Germany's overriding strategic goal must therefore be to preserve, protect, and adapt this world order."<sup>278</sup>

Thus, Germany's power, role, and scope in the international system is determined by its capability to grow continuously and to remain one of the world's leading economies in some union with America and Asia; hence, Szabo argues that the political leaders in Germany are primarily concerned with aspects of economic prosperity and competitiveness, and less with global security issues.<sup>279</sup> In a realist paradigm, the interests and power materialized in economic strength assure Germany's survival in an anarchic and competitive world, as Germany defines its national interests in terms of power, not in the form of military capabilities, but in economic strength in a generally peaceful world of more or less ideological consensus. In this fashion, the so-called long lines of Germany's traditional foreign policy characteristics—multilateralism, European integration, and transatlantic partnership—are still valid in 2015, but with different accentuation because Germany's has become increasingly self-confident in Europe and in the World, while the world order itself shows significant signs of disintegration or a violent and inevitable reordering.<sup>280</sup>

Germany's evolving self-confidence was paralleled by the discussion of whether its foreign policy changed after 1990, embarking on an individual path in foreign affairs, or whether the continuation of traditional German foreign policy characterized by a culture of restraint as a civilian power dominated Germany's approach to the world as

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<sup>278</sup>German Institute for International and Security Affairs and German Marshall Fund of the United States, "New Power New Responsibility: Elements for a German Foreign and Security Policy for a Changing world" (Berlin, Germany; Washington, DC: German Institute for International and Security Affairs and German Marshall Fund of the United States), 6, [http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/projekt\\_papiere/GermanForeignSecurityPolicy\\_SWP\\_GMF\\_2013.pdf](http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/projekt_papiere/GermanForeignSecurityPolicy_SWP_GMF_2013.pdf).

<sup>279</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 8.

<sup>280</sup>Pradetto, "The Polity of German Foreign Policy," 26.

visible since the 1950s. After the ground-breaking decision in 1999 to deploy the *Bundeswehr* in Kosovo without a UN-mandate (the use of German special forces after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in New York), it was especially Chancellor Schroeder's declaration of a "German Way" in the context of opposition to the Iraqi invasion in 2003 and the abstention in the United Nations Security Council on the Libya resolution in 2011 that allegedly showed Germany's new self-confidence. These steps also led to perceptions, by friends as well as critics, of this nation of the "paradox of German power"<sup>281</sup> and caused frowns in partner governments. Considering the changed environment in which Germany found itself after 1990, Pradetto explains that trying to harmonize foreign policy traditions of the old Federal Republic with the new requirements emerging particularly "in the area of military operations . . . may . . . give the impression of controversial foreign policy discussions."<sup>282</sup> While the 2002–2003 decision by former Chancellor Schroeder about Iraq and the 2011 decision to abstain from a UN Security Council vote on Libya, driven by former Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, should be seen in the light of domestic politics, these decisions nevertheless had profound consequences for Germany's reputation as a power and ally. The manner in which Schroeder opposed the U.S. plans for invading Iraq and the fact that Germany allied with Russia and France caused the most significant and deep rupture in US-German relations since 1945. But the German "special way" (*Sonderweg*) was also a renunciation of the traditional multilateral approach for Germany, as Schroeder was "prepared to act without reference to multilateral institutions," as he declared that Germany would not participate even if there would be a UN Security Council resolution.<sup>283</sup> While Risse and Kundnani point to a shift in Germany's identity as a power, they also refer to the changing global environment affecting the transatlantic relations, "as Germany and the U.S. were no longer as important to each other as they were during the Cold War."<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>281</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 4.

<sup>282</sup>Pradetto, "The Polity of German Foreign Policy," 26.

<sup>283</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 58.

<sup>284</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 56; Risse, "Kontinuität durch Wandel," 30.

The diverging interests in the depth of the transatlantic relations and the rift between the U.S. and Germany recovered somewhat after Angela Merkel in 2005 and Barack Obama in 2008 took over office in what has proved essentially to be a false hope. The WikiLeaks scandal, the revelations of Edward Snowden about U.S. signals intelligence, and the possibility that the U.S. National Security Agency targeted German citizens, as well as a revulsion against such U.S. firms as Google and Facebook, have gathered since 2008 and harmed relations. Particularly in light of the unsolved NSA scandal, the US-German relations remain burdened, and a fraction of German public opinion engages in anti-American campaigns that would make Honecker proud. Germany's *Westbindung* has been weakened by selective decisions, and the once-prominent commitment to multilateralism transitioned from "reflexive" to "selective" multilateralism in the first decade of the twenty-first century.<sup>285</sup> Germany will always opt for a multilateral approach where it deems necessary but will act bilaterally when it does not. Admittedly, despite Germany's economic power, it is increasingly less capable of acting unilaterally.<sup>286</sup> The advent of the crisis in Ukraine in 2014, however, poses a test of such policy that allows few of the luxuries of choice that might have been said to exist to opt out and or to shift burdens, as happened in the period from 1990–2011.

Nevertheless, Germany's foreign policy after reunification has been dominated more by continuity than by significant change from the alliance cohesion of an earlier epoch or the emphasis on continental interest narrowly defined, although change occurred mainly in the employment of instruments, such as military force, which probably signifies the most relevant change.<sup>287</sup> Moreover, in the sense of "German foreign policy is peace policy"<sup>288</sup> and its reliance on economic power, Szabo concludes that "stability, predictability, and reliability of Germany's reputation as a stable economic partner are paramount. In this sense, risk aversion, already a deeply embedded trait in the German

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<sup>285</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 84.

<sup>286</sup>Pradetto, "The Polity of German Foreign Policy," 26.

<sup>287</sup>Risse, "Kontinuität durch Wandel," 31.

<sup>288</sup>Federal Foreign Office, "Germany's Foreign Policy Parameters."



political culture, is reinforced.”<sup>289</sup> Under Angela Merkel, Germany’s international role has changed again, and the discussion about a change in traditional pillars of German foreign policy went silent. Within foreign policy, the chancellor uses Germany’s new self-confidence and powers to mediate between Russia and the West, primarily the US, thus acknowledging Germany’s bridging function in Europe.<sup>290</sup> Whether intended or not, with the crisis in Ukraine and the advent of Russian irredentism by force of arms, German statecraft must master a problem of singular difficulty for which old formulas of general peace and *entente* are unworkable. So far, Merkel’s foreign policy aims to strengthen the European integration amid domestic and international sources of violent disintegration, and she argues that a more cohesive European policy, especially defense and security policy, will be key to an enhanced transatlantic partnership. However, keeping German core interests in mind, increasingly defining national interest in terms of economic power, and applying it to try to retain a stable international order, meant, according to Maull, that Germany’s enthusiasm for “exports had eroded its civilian power identity”<sup>291</sup> with a neo-mercantilist policy that could not entirely turn a blind eye to organized conflict and violence.

In 2012, the Foreign Office introduced the term *Gestaltungsmacht* (a power that shapes the international order, a vague reference to Bismarck and Willy Brandt, the efficacy of which has been put to perhaps too rigorous a test in Ukraine) in the context of broadening Germany’s relations with rising powers like China, India, and Brazil, with the objective to strengthen Germany’s economy and prospects for export as inner-European demand declined in the wake of the financial and Euro crises. This aspiration to ride the upward tide of globalization characterizes the will to widen the zone of stability and economic growth around Germany’s center and beyond. Promoting its own source of power may explain Germany’s support of the EU’s extension towards Eastern Europe,

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<sup>289</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 10.

<sup>290</sup>Bernhard Mueller-Haerlin, “Angela Merkel’s Foreign Policy,” *Contemporary Review* 289, no. 1684 (Spring, 2007), 1, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/204967016?accountid=12702>.

<sup>291</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 87.

even if such policy lately antagonized Russia. In the end, Germany's foreign policy finds itself caught between export-driven *Realpolitik* and value-based *Moralpolitik*.

Balancing between *Real-* and *Moralpolitik*, Germany's current foreign policy is aiming at "the preservation and continued adaptation of this free, open, and peaceful order. [However,] in future, Germany will have to invest more than it does now to preserve this beneficial status quo."<sup>292</sup> In this regard, Foreign Minister Steinmeier already clarified the noticeable deficits in German foreign policy concerning crisis management, in particular, in regards to the 2014 Ukraine crisis, the changing global order with the retreat of U.S. power, and Germany's unexpected and challenging position within Europe. Steinmeier promised to address these trials of policy in what are uncharted waters.<sup>293</sup> To avoid possible misconceptions and enhance cooperation over confrontation according to its foreign policy culture, Germany's Russia Policy is an important part of German foreign policy and has an important impact on the nations power leverage itself as a civilian power with the additional aspiration to be a shaping power.

## **5. Germany's Russia Policy**

Germany and Russia are fated to share close, interdependent relations. After 1990, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who enjoyed a close relation with Mikhail Gorbachev and later with Boris Yeltsin, prioritized Germany's Russia policy in order to ensure the complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Germany and to avoid any obstruction of the domestic post-reunification developments in Germany. After 1998 and under the Gerhard Schroeder cabinet, Russia policy became a high-prioritized policy area even more in view of the different world view of the socialist chancellor, which had been declared a *Chefsache*, meaning determination through the chancellery, or rather, the chancellor himself.<sup>294</sup> When Vladimir Putin took power in the Kremlin in 2000, Schroeder and Putin developed close personal relations that strongly affected Germany's policy towards

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<sup>292</sup>German Institute, "New Power New Responsibility," 6.

<sup>293</sup>Frank-Walter Steinmeier, "The DNA of German Foreign Policy."

<sup>294</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 37.

Russia under the SPD-Green coalition government. It is argued that the close personal relations of Putin and Schroeder came because of similar personal backgrounds because both politicians' families were from the poor, working social class, both had earned degrees in law, both had worked their political way up towards the highest echelons of political power, and both shared a barely bridled affection for the trappings of showy wealth and the good life.<sup>295</sup> Schroeder's decision to declare a *Sonderweg* (a special German way) in 2002–2003—contradictory to its traditional multilateralism as well as Atlanticism—and thus oppose the U.S. invasion of Iraq welded Putin and Schroeder's friendship even closer.<sup>296</sup> The clear prioritization of a “Russia first” approach during the tenure of Kohl and Schroeder was intensified by Schroeder's pronounced personalization of Germany's Russia policy. In its own way, this policy was a clear rejection of Kohl's bond to Clinton, which stood in the tradition of Adenauer's role with the United States in the first years of the FRG. Schroeder's statecraft was even more pointedly of an eastern orientation than that of Willy Brandt in the epoch 1969–1974.

During his term as chancellor, social democrat Gerhard Schroeder employed a *Ostpolitik* revived—a modification of the successful and traditional *Ostpolitik* under Willy Brandt and others—and “change through rapprochement” became “change through trade,” as the SPDs thought that enhanced economic relations would automatically lead to political and societal change in Russia.<sup>297</sup> In this regard, Kundnani calls *Ostpolitik* revised an illusion, as the reference to Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, even a modified *Ostpolitik*, neglects the fact that while change through rapprochement did not aim at ideological change, change through trade did exactly that.<sup>298</sup> Moreover, the slogan *Wandel durch Handel* (change through trade) is usable for any continuation of trade in any political situation in order to justify commercialism under any circumstance.<sup>299</sup> *Wandel durch*

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<sup>295</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 37.

<sup>296</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 79.

<sup>297</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 82.

<sup>298</sup>Kundnani, Hans. “The Ostpolitik Illusion: Despite What Berlin Proclaims, Last Century's Strategies Are No Longer Relevant.” *IP Journal*, German Council on Foreign relations, October 17, 2013, <https://ip-journal.dgap.org/en/ip-journal/topics/ostpolitik-illusion>.

<sup>299</sup>*Ibid.*, 4

*Handel* can also signify a rupture with statecraft and its traditions since 1945, and the return to a less wholesome variant from the epoch prior to 1914 or even in the epoch 1939–1941.

Thus, it came a no real surprise that the slogan *Wandel durch Handel* only paid off in economic terms for those firms positioned to profit most. For example, in Russia, instead of democratization reforms, an increasingly authoritarian, centralized, super-presidential system based on the security apparatus emerged in the midst of oil-lubricated prosperity, and “frustration about the ongoing lack of domestic reforms and the lack of progress in establishing rule of law and transparency is [still] growing.”<sup>300</sup> Despite the fact that Germany’s Russia policy under Schroeder was internationally criticized and even perceived by some Eastern European nations (e.g., Poland) as a threat, Schroeder defended the growing ranks of critics of Putin when the chancellor described the Russian president as “a ‘flawless democrat’ despite his increasing authoritarianism,”<sup>301</sup> and stressed the strategic partnership between Germany and Russia.

Although the Green Party held the Federal Foreign Office in Schroeder’s coalition cabinet, then-State Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier acted as the secretary of the chancellery, where the German policy towards Russia was conceived for execution, considering it was declared a *Chefsache*. Steinmeier was one of the architects of Schroeder’s Russia policy and continued in Merkel’s first cabinet as foreign minister, pursuing, on the basis of Schroeder’s Russia policy, a path termed “modernization through interdependence,” which continued to aim at the economization of German-Russian relations amid the rigors of globalization with a Eurasian continental focus.<sup>302</sup> In May 2008, as the world economy began to collapse, Foreign Minister Steinmeier laid the foundation for a modernization partnership during a speech addressing academics in

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<sup>300</sup>Stefan Meister, “Germany’s Russia Policy under Angela Merkel: A Balance Sheet,” *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs* 22, no. 2 (2013): 28, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1509100821?accountid=12702>; Hannes Adomeit, “German-Russian Relations: Change of Paradigm versus ‘Business as Usual,’” *Note du Cefra*, no. 120, February 2015, 13, [http://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/ndc\\_120\\_adomeit\\_en\\_0.pdf](http://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/ndc_120_adomeit_en_0.pdf).

<sup>301</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 79; Francis T. Miko, “Germany’s ‘Grand Coalition’ Government: Prospects and Implications,” CRS Report for Congress, January 17, 2006, 11.

<sup>302</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 37–39.

Yekaterinburg. He proclaimed a German-Russian modernization partnership with a European dimension, certain that, by offering such a modernization partnership, Russian society, the government, and the state would become more open, transparent, and guided by rule of law. Such policy would create more opportunities for German-Russian exchanges.<sup>303</sup> However, with the sudden Georgian War in August 2008, a *caesura* happened. With the world economic crisis and the apogee of U.S. power, a change of climate had taken place that few expected and which represented a crisis for the policy of transformation through trade whereby persons close to policy makers ignored how the advocates of power and empire were assuming new power in the Kremlin. The SPD foreign minister stopped talking about a modernization partnership, and the CDU stated in its election program that Germany “want[s] relations with Russia to be as close as possible, but that the depth and breadth of relations depend on Russia’s behavior and willingness to meet its international obligations and play by the rules.”<sup>304</sup> Despite criticism of Russia’s military operations into Georgia, which went very well and put a huge hole in U.S. ideas about the further course of NATO enlargement and which made calls for Russian compliance with international law, Germany and the majority in the West returned to “business as usual” in their relations with Russia within mere months.<sup>305</sup>

Overall, in the first Merkel cabinet of 2005–2009, Germany’s “Russia policy remained relatively unchanged during the first Grand Coalition, with Merkel emphasizing the importance of Russia and Russian energy,”<sup>306</sup> while observing prevailing constraints, such as her East German origin and the coalition agreement with the SPD, which favored close relations with Russia as part of the spirit of the times and the legacy of Schroeder’s policy. Merkel had grown up in the Baltic lands of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, in the former GDR, and spent her childhood under the influence of German Lutheranism, as

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<sup>303</sup>Frank-Walter Steinmeier, “Für eine deutsch-russische” [Towards a German-Russian modernization partnership], speech delivered by Foreign Minister Steinmeier at the Ural-University, Yekaterinburg, May 13, 2008, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2008/080513-BM-Russland.html>.

<sup>304</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 40.

<sup>305</sup>Adomeit, “German-Russian Relations,” 6.

<sup>306</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 39.

well as the natural sciences in education, amid the communist East German establishment. Despite claims that she became accustomed with the communist establishment prior to 1989, she nonetheless conforms to a kind of personality that came to prominence in 1990 as something new in German politics: She was a leading woman, and, at the same time, she was a person who revived traditions of statecraft from former times. Most significant, however, was Merkel's experience with the dominant Soviet security and military presence in the GDR until 1989. Perceived by those with limited insight as a reserved thinker with a doctorate degree in physics and characterized as a pragmatic politician, Merkel differentiates herself from her predecessor, Schroeder, with what can be described only as Prussian virtues, as she "does not put herself in the limelight as her predecessor and thus does not embody the power she bear."<sup>307</sup> This character trait should not be mistaken for weakness. After all, to Moltke is ascribed the ideal—to be more than you appear—which could just as easily be Merkel's motto as well. Nevertheless, with Merkel's chancellery, the "uncritical times of Gerhard Schroeder [were] definitely over,"<sup>308</sup> as concerned the bilateral bond between Berlin and Moscow. Merkel repeatedly addressed the lack of democratic reform in Russia, which presently became retrograde (with the revival of repression), and she called for guaranteeing human rights and rule of law while carefully balancing her words.

While a special relationship with Russia was maintained during the first Merkel cabinet, especially due to Steinmeier's initiatives from the Federal Foreign Office, the coalition with the liberal FDP after 2009 finally led to an end of the special status of Russia in the German government, and a sober tone replaced the comfortable and friendly tone that had been characterizing Germany's hopeful Russia policy under Kohl and Schroeder.<sup>309</sup> On a personal level, Merkel avoided meeting Russian Prime Minister Putin and sought to support his successor Dmitri Medvedev, as the latter was regarded as the embodiment of the "New Russia," a Russia that would modernize and engage in democratic reform. Because the new Foreign Minister Westerwelle (FDP) did not

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<sup>307</sup>Mueller-Haerlin, "Angela Merkel's Foreign Policy," 2.

<sup>308</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>309</sup>Meister, "Reframing Germany's Russia Policy," 3.

emphasize the German Russia Policy and tried to engage with Russia's smaller neighbors, the influence of the Federal Foreign Office concerning Russia Policy declined during 2005–2009. The chancellery, and partially the *Bundestag*, exerted more influence in this regard.<sup>310</sup> However, German policy towards Russia had not been a top priority for the chancellor during the Christian-Liberal coalition from 2009 to 2013, as in addition the expertise in the *Bundestag* and the government decreased, and the emphasis of policy shifted to the Euro crisis.<sup>311</sup> Meister concluded that Germany and Russia conferred about the same topic but had diverging interests and priorities, which led to increased bilateral misunderstandings. For example, while “German decision-makers support reforming Russian politics through economic cooperation, the Russian side is above all interested in economic cooperation and investment,”<sup>312</sup> as well as technology transfer. The lack of reciprocity on the Russian side, which was one of the core foundations of the German approach, leads to a dilemma and casts a shadow on the state of Germany's relations with Russia, which have been continuously worsening since the Georgian War of 2008 and the world economic crisis of the same year.<sup>313</sup>

In 2012, Germany's Russia policy under Merkel suffered another major setback when Putin became, for the third time, Russian president and swiftly and without hesitation destroyed all hopes of reform that were invested in Medvedev. The latter became Russian Prime Minister, but he was only a shadow figure to be seen pliantly receiving orders from the boss—a perfect castling for Putin. This sudden and unexpected move for the West augured no good for anyone. After the 2012 return of President Putin, Merkel increasingly questioned the value of partnership with Russia, a country that opposed western democratic values and in the beginning was faced with rising protests among the population in Moscow.<sup>314</sup> This upswing of protest became fateful for both sides. Trenin argues that Germany's Russia policy must be more balanced, as “interests

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<sup>310</sup>Meister, “Germany's Russia Policy under Angela Merkel,” 29.

<sup>311</sup>*Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>312</sup>*Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>313</sup>Constanze Stelzenmueller, “Germany's Russia Question: A New *Ostpolitik* for Europe,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 2 (March/April 2009): 97, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20699496>.

<sup>314</sup>Mankoff, “Relations with the European Union,” 285.

are as important as values.”<sup>315</sup> Thus, it is not a question of a value-first *Moralpolitik* or a value-less *Realpolitik*, but rather of *Moralpolitik* and *Realpolitik*; however, to pursue both puts German decision-makers in a constant moral dilemma. While representatives of German businesses committed to eastern markets, especially via the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, put pressure on the government to avoid harsh criticism of Russian politics, many representatives of non-governmental organizations and media criticized the chancellery for taking a too-soft approach and for not supporting Russian society sufficiently.<sup>316</sup> Such stresses and strains are perfectly normal in diplomacy, but given the imperative for trade in statecraft, such policy has shifted the balance to economic interest groups with an eastern orientation—an old phenomenon with an unlovely past.

With the 2013 federal elections, a new grand coalition between the SPD and the CDU/CSU was formed, and Frank-Walter Steinmeier became, for a second term, Germany’s minister of foreign affairs in Merkel’s third cabinet. While the CDU/CSU–SPD coalition agreement addresses a renewed push for a German-Russian modernization partnership, the agreement also calls for Russian compliance and continued commitment to rule of law and democratic standards while emphasizing that “security in and for Europe is only achievable with and not against Russia.”<sup>317</sup>

However, Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 and Putin’s irregular war in East Ukraine has led circles of Berlin’s foreign policy elites to the painful realization that “the ‘strategic partnership’ has proven never to have existed; the ‘modernization partnership’ did not get off the ground; [and] . . . the political ‘special relationship’ has come to an end.”<sup>318</sup> The sum of this failure of policy is a diplomatic revolution that shifts a major burden onto Berlin. This event further marks a parting of the ways for the post-1989 and

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<sup>315</sup>Dimitri Trenin, “A New Russia Policy for Germany,” Carnegie Moscow Center, November 2013, [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/new\\_german\\_russia\\_policy2013\\_Trenin.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/new_german_russia_policy2013_Trenin.pdf).

<sup>316</sup>Angela Stent, “Berlin’s Russia Challenge,” *The National Interest*, no. 88 (March 2007): 50, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/218405363?accountid=12702>.

<sup>317</sup>“Deutschlands Zukunft gestalten: Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD” [Shaping Germany’s future: Coalition agreement between CDU, CSU, and SPD], Berlin, December 14, 2013, 118, <http://www.cdu.de/artikel/der-koalitionsvertrag-von-cdu-csu-und-spd>.

<sup>318</sup>Adomeit, “German-Russian Relations,” 31.



post-9/11 idea that war is no longer a feature of European politics, the breakup of ex-Yugoslavia notwithstanding. Germany's Russia policy, guided by an *Ostpolitik* revised, needs to make pressing decisions in light of a moral dilemma between a value-based *Moralpolitik*, embedded in the West, or a German *Sonderweg*, an interest-guided *Realpolitik*. Moreover, a critical person must ask whether the endless recitation of Egon Bahr's heroic story with Willy Brandt (from the construction of the wall in 1961 until the collapse of same in 1989) is appropriate in what is plainly a new era, the rules of which are hardly evident, and the violence of which is more toxic and aggressive than might be said to have existed in the thermonuclear-dominated stability of the high Cold War that allowed the FRG to act as it did from 1969 until 1989. The return of *Machtpolitik* under Putin heralded itself in 2008, became dominant in 2014, and has meant a rupture in Germany's existing statecraft.

### C. CIVIL SOCIETY AND FOREIGN POLICY

In a historical context, the fate of a divided Germany during the Cold War was significantly interlinked with international politics because the survival of the nation depended on the protective umbrella of its Western Allies in NATO. This fact gave the West, especially the United States, important, leading roles in integration for what turned out to be great success in German national interest in 1989, and which, since 9/11, has unfortunately lost meaning for many Germans. Until reunification, Germany's foreign policy towards *Westbindung* and Brandt's *Ostpolitik* aimed at overcoming the European division with a repeat of what had been a remarkably peaceful diplomatic revolution and non-violent revision of the European order. In this regard, foreign and domestic policy in Germany were deeply interconnected because matters of foreign policy, especially towards the Soviet Union and East Germany, directly affected the lives of all Germans. Exemplary are the unpopular, but equally necessary, foundations of the *Bundeswehr* in 1955 and the NATO-double track decision in 1979, which both faced strong civil opposition in both East and West Germany. Despite the deployment of military forces outside of Central Europe in 1994, civil society in Germany still remains highly skeptical of the use military force as an instrument of foreign policy and prioritizes diplomatic means and civilian instruments, as the use of military force is seen as last resort.

Societal influence on foreign policy formation depends on public media as an intermediary because the public lacks other resources of information and requires the media to inform the public in order to form an opinion and participate in the political decision-making process via the electoral vote.<sup>319</sup> This implies that foreign-policy decisions have an impact on domestic affairs and can be summarized as “all politics are local.” Although the public has only indirect influence on foreign policy formation via the electoral vote, its opinion is an important scale for the measurement of governmental politics.<sup>320</sup> In Germany, civil society is still affected by the burdens of the Cold War and national division, where West Germans were influenced by a democratic political system with a free market, while East Germans were socialized under a communist political system with a planned economy and a strong secret-police presence. However, in spring 2014, amid a world order of growing violence and economic turmoil, the interest in foreign policy in Germany was high, wherein 68 percent of the populace were strongly interested in foreign policy.<sup>321</sup>

## **1. German Civil Society after Reunification**

Germany’s identification as a civilian power can be seen as a *Leitmotif* of public opinion (despite a rearmed FRG), not only since reunification, but since the founding of West Germany in 1949.<sup>322</sup> The division of Germany led to the creation of two different characteristics of national identity. In the GDR, the people and their identity were influenced by Soviet domination and political socialization, isolated from the cosmopolitan forces of the West—a fact not wholly appreciated by West Germans who newly discovered the society of the former GDR in 1990 for themselves and had great trouble fully understanding what they found there.<sup>323</sup> This different attitude was

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<sup>319</sup>Oppermann and Hoesel, “Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen,” 55.

<sup>320</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>321</sup>Körber-Stiftung, “Einmischen oder zurückhalten?” [Intervene or withhold?], Hamburg, Germany, 2014, accessed May 12, 2015, [http://www.koerber-stiftung.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/internationale\\_politik/sonderthemen/umfrage\\_aussenpolitik/Koerber-Stiftung\\_Umfrage\\_Aussenpolitik\\_Broschuere.pdf](http://www.koerber-stiftung.de/fileadmin/user_upload/internationale_politik/sonderthemen/umfrage_aussenpolitik/Koerber-Stiftung_Umfrage_Aussenpolitik_Broschuere.pdf).

<sup>322</sup>Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen-*, 63.

<sup>323</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 31.

expressed by the differentiation in *Ossis* and *Wessis* in the 1990s and plays an important role today because Germany is split over the Ukraine crisis. This fact notwithstanding, today the nation is led by two especially prominent former citizens of the GDR, the irony of which is noteworthy and the meaning of which would require its own analysis.

An opinion poll conducted in April 2014 showed that 49 percent of the German population foresees a median position for Germany between Russia and the West, while 45 percent foresee a Germany embedded solely in the West.<sup>324</sup> The desire for a third path is a corollary of the old notion of a German special path (a German singularity) because it is adapted to the present. It is not an especially new phenomenon because it was present in the Weimar Republic, in the Third Reich, and in the Cold War in various iterations. As such, this idea operates in civil society in various forms, especially among those critical of a western orientation, or a western European orientation.

The glory of the centrality of Germany and the residue of the Cold War is confirmed in a recent study from the Pew Research Center, showing that, in East Germany, only 44 percent of the respondents are in favor of stronger relations with the U.S. than with Russia, while in the West, 61 percent of the respondents favor strong relations with the U.S. rather than with Russia.<sup>325</sup> This phenomenon plays a role today in the Ukraine crisis since 2014 as to the fate of Ukraine and the willingness among a significant percentage of the German population to embrace and argue for Russian apologia. In this context, the political editor for the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* complains that there has been a spike in accusations made against him that he is “anti-Russian, . . . [and] having been steered in that direction by American interests.”<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>324</sup>Statista, “Wo sollte Deutschlands Position im Konflikt mit Russland sein? Und wo steht Deutschland gegenwärtig?” [Where should Germany’s position in the conflict with Russia be? And where is Germany’s current position?], *Statista*, 2015, accessed May 13, 2015, <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/295563/umfrage/umfrage-zur-soll-und-ist-positionierung-von-deutschland-im-konflikt-mit-russland/>.

<sup>325</sup>Pew Research Center, “Germany and the United States: Reliable Allies,” *Pew Research Center: Global Attitudes and Trends*, May 7, 2015, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/05/07/germany-and-the-united-states-reliable-allies/>.

<sup>326</sup>Jochen Bittner, “Eastern Germans’ Soft Spot for Russia,” *New York Times*, December 30, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/31/opinion/bittner-eastern-germans-soft-spot-for-russia.html>.

The generational change in Germany is also important to note in this regard because it is mainly the elder East German generation that favors pro-Russian attitudes and increasingly regard western integration and close relations with the U.S. with skepticism as Cold War patterns of conflict possibly remerge in Europe. Bittner recalls the emotional challenges for the East German population during the reunification process and argues that, while Polish society has transformed from within since 1980, the East German societal system was just replaced by West Germany's, while the sensitivity lies in the fact that one "will never know what it is like to have the values . . . [the East Germans] grew up with thrown on the scrapheap of history"<sup>327</sup>—a factor not completely taken into account by many in the West.

Opinion polls show that the younger generation, the post-reunification generation, is more willing to engage internationally in order to protect human rights, though not necessarily with military force. In this context, the older generation beyond 60 years is especially wary of military operations abroad, with 90 percent in favor of reducing the *Bundeswehr* deployments.<sup>328</sup> Angela Merkel, born in 1954 and brought up in the GDR, signifies, like Schroeder, a generation that has no direct World War II memories and thus "marks 'the advent of a third postwar generation' as Henry Kissinger described it: 'less in thrall to the emotional pro-Americanism of the 1950s and 60s, but also not shaped by the passions of the so-called '68 generation', which formulated harsh critiques of the US."<sup>329</sup> However, anti-American emotions are on the rise, which, while partially based on Germany's divided identity character, is gradually increasing in light of the ongoing NSA affair, which 12 percent of the Germans regard as most important event in US-German relations in 75 years.<sup>330</sup>

Kundnani concludes that the increasing anti-American sentiments in the broad German public are contributing to possible foreign policy shifts, citing the 2003 Iraq War and the 2008 economic crisis in addition to the NSA affair, leading some Germans to

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<sup>327</sup>Jochen Bittner, "Eastern Germans' Soft Spot for Russia," 2.

<sup>328</sup>Körber-Stiftung, "Einmischen oder zurückhalten?," 6, 8.

<sup>329</sup>Mueller-Haerlin, "Angela Merkel's Foreign Policy," 3.

<sup>330</sup>Pew Research Center, "Germany and the United States: Reliable Allies," 5.

state that “they no longer share values with the United States, and some say they never did.”<sup>331</sup> Such a revival of anti U.S. attitudes recalls the epoch of 1917–1918, as well as of 1941–1945 and the anti-US propaganda of the German right and left in the Cold War. Nevertheless, despite the current rift in US-German relations over free trade or the NSA eavesdropping in Germany, 62 percent of Germans regard the U.S. as a reliable ally, and 57 percent favor stronger ties with the US, while 60 percent want Germany to engage in the Ukraine conflict in close relation with the U.S. and Western partners.<sup>332</sup>

German civil society, due to its legacy, has had a difficult relationship with its military since 1949. As such, civil society assigned the *Bundeswehr* only a “secondary or tertiary role to force as the measure of national or international power.”<sup>333</sup> However, during the Cold War and with conscription in place, integration into civil society and acceptance was hardly in doubt. With the factual abolishment of conscription on July 1, 2011, the fear arose that the Germans would distance themselves even more from the *Bundeswehr*, which would lead to diverging development between society and German military and which would have implications for foreign-policy decisions.<sup>334</sup> With *Bundeswehr* operations in Afghanistan and an increased number of civilian and German casualties, the Germans’ difficult relations with foreign policy hard power became more strained. Gauland wrote that it was not only the skepticism, disinterest, and rejection of the *Bundeswehr*, but especially the “refusal to think at all about the necessity and

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<sup>331</sup>Hans Kundnani, “Leaving the West Behind: Germany Looks East,” *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 1 (2015): 110.

<sup>332</sup>Pew Research Center, “Germany and the United States,” 4+11; Statista, “Umfrage zur Rolle Deutschlands in der Ukraine Krise” [Opinion poll on Germany’s role in the Ukraine crisis], Statista, 2015, accessed May 13, 2015, <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/299428/umfrage/umfrage-zur-rolle-deutschlands-in-der-ukraine-krise/>.

<sup>333</sup>Donald Abenheim and Carol Hallady, “Stability in Flux: Policy, Strategy and Institutions in Germany,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, eds. Thomas C. Bruneau and Florian Christiana Matei (New York: Routledge, 2013), 304.

<sup>334</sup>Heiko Biehl and Harald Schoen, eds. *Sicherheitspolitik und Streitkräfte im Urteil der Bürger: Theorien, Methoden, Befunde* [Security policy and military forces in the public opinion: Theory, methods, indications], (Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer Fachmedien, 2015), 7.

consequences of military force,”<sup>335</sup> attributing the German population a “diffuse whole body pacifism,”<sup>336</sup> and neglecting global reality. Twenty-five years after reunification, the German public seemed to have transformed “Never again Auschwitz” to a modified “Never again War” theme to cater to a self-perception of being a peaceful, post-heroic society.<sup>337</sup> With the Ukraine crisis and the Russian annexation of the Crimea closing in on its first anniversary, 51 percent of Germans think that the crisis does affects each German citizen’s life, while only 30 percent dismiss any influence of the current crisis on their life, which remains to be seen.<sup>338</sup>

## 2. Think Tanks and Mainstream Media on Foreign Affairs

As shown in previous chapters, foreign-policy decision-making takes place in small, elite circles in Berlin that are fitted into the mass of opinion in a process of debate and democratic give-and-take, which can get quite polemical. While Germany enjoys a wide spectrum of media outlets, its foreign policy expertise, especially in relations to Russia, has declined significantly since 1990, as such well-known and respected weekly newspapers, such as *Die Zeit* or the business-focused *Handelsblatt*, no longer maintain their own correspondents in Moscow.<sup>339</sup> This trend arises specifically from changes in priorities since 1989, as well as the decline of excellent journalism, generally, as a consequence of the media phenomena of the twenty-first century.

Mass media such as TV, radio, and Internet do play a major role in politics in that they shape public opinion with what content presented and how, especially in public television, which retains a reasonable level of debate when compared to neo-liberal, English-speaking news outlets and with the collapse of intellectual inquiry since 2001.

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<sup>335</sup>Alexander Gauland, “Diffuser Pazifismus: Warum sich die Deutschen mit Gewalt so schwer tun” [Diffuse Pacifism: Why the Germans have such a hard time with violence.], *Der Tagesspiegel*, July 23, 2012, accessed May 13, 2015, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/meinung/diffuser-pazifismus-warum-sich-die-deutschen-mit-gewalt-so-schwer-tun/6907386.html>.

<sup>336</sup>Ibid.

<sup>337</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 69.

<sup>338</sup>YouGov, “Umfrage: Große Hoffnungen auf besseres Verhältnis zu Russland” [Opinion poll: Great hopes for better relation towards Russia], February 9, 2015, accessed May 13, 2015, <https://yougov.de/news/2015/02/09/umfrage-grosse-hoffnungen-auf-besseres-verhaeltnis-/>.

<sup>339</sup>Meister, “Reframing Germany’s Russia Policy,” 3.

While the Internet is generally unrestricted in terms of content and availability, German TV can be divided into public broadcasting (with main channels ARD and ZDF) and privately funded channels (such as SAT 1, RTL, or special interest formats). As the public gets its information from media, it is noteworthy that the public channels devote 15–20 percent of its program time to political news coverage, while private channels have decreased the political coverage from 11 percent in 1987 to only 5.5 percent in 1997.<sup>340</sup> This phenomenon symbolizes the triumph of markets in the public sphere, the results of which need little explanation, especially from the viewpoint of a security-policy professional. With the availability of the whole Internet reaching beyond national borders and the possibility of everyone posting articles and comments, journalistic objectivity is in decline, and polemics of the most primitive sort has made an astonishing comeback, as it was with the worst of yellow journalism of the late nineteenth century. In foreign affairs, where people cannot personally witness evolving events like war and peace, which might be possible with domestic events, the media plays a very central role in shaping public opinion. This effect can be exploited by those wholly unconcerned by democracy and checks and balances as propaganda campaigns in the Internet, which is becoming increasingly common in the current Ukraine crisis. The Ukraine crisis occurred a hundred years after the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, and with it revived the most vicious and calumny-laden practices from a century ago, all of which are ideally suited to flourish in the digital free-for-all.

Therefore, unsurprisingly, critics in Germany and abroad have denounced the press as a “liar press” (*Luegenpresse*). For example, pro-Russian protesters, referring to the Ukraine crisis, accused the West German-based media of failing to analyze post-communist Germany correctly. Such enraged critics also rebuke analyses of contemporary Russia, partially based on individual socialization under the communist system in East Germany.<sup>341</sup> Little to no shame adheres to those who wield *Luegenpresse*,

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<sup>340</sup>Frank Brettschneider, “Mass Media, Public Opinion and Foreign Policy,” in *Germany’s New Foreign Policy: Decision-Making in an Interdependent World*, ed. Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Karl Kaiser (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 240–41.

<sup>341</sup>Bittner, “Eastern Germans’ Soft Spot for Russia,” 3.

since this term is straight out of the Nazi Lexikon, a fact that sparks indignation if one is cheeky enough to point it out in the heat of debate.

In this regard, it is a thin line for the average German citizen to differentiate between objective news coverage and state-backed “information” with propagandistic tendencies, such as witnessed by the Russian state-backed TV station RT (formerly Russia Today), which is also available in Germany and Great Britain.<sup>342</sup>

The small circles, where foreign policy is discussed on a professional level, are primarily located in Berlin, close to the decision-makers. While in the U.S. capital a wide spectrum of think tanks on foreign policy exist, in Berlin “there is only one think tank for foreign policy which meets U.S. standards, the German Institute for International and Security affairs (SWP).”<sup>343</sup> In addition, the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) have extensive expertise on Russia, for example, in Stefan Meister, who changed from the DGAP to the ECFR in 2013, and Hans Kundnani.<sup>344</sup> These institutions, however, have been overshadowed by the last quarter century of more or less European unity, as well as an emphasis on the Middle East, in which German expertise looms less prominent in public life than in European security.

The major political parties represented in the *Bundestag* support political foundations, which are interlinked with the parties, but also with parliament itself. These foundations, with their own research and policy branches, are further linked to the chancellery and federal ministries because they engage significantly in international policy analysis and act in concert with foreign policy.<sup>345</sup> Founded in the late 1950s as a

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<sup>342</sup>The Guardian, “Kremlin-Backed RT to Launch UK TV News Channel,” *Guardian*, October 28, 2014, accessed May 13, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/oct/28/kremlin-rt-uk-news-channel-russia-today>; Carsten Luther, “Das hat uns gerade noch gefehlt” [Just what we always needed], *Die Zeit Online*, November 19, 2014, accessed May 10, 2015, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2014-11/rt-deutsch-russland-propaganda-luegen>.

<sup>343</sup>Mueller-Haerlin, “Angela Merkel’s Foreign Policy,” 4.

<sup>344</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 57–59.

<sup>345</sup>Sebastian Bartsch, “Political Foundations: Linking the Worlds of Foreign Policy and Transnationalism,” in *Germany’s New Foreign Policy: Decision-Making in an Interdependent World*, eds. Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Karl Kaiser (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 206.



means to strengthen West German democracy during the Cold War, the political foundations have created outreach program with projects in most countries across the globe promoting democracy and free markets, such as the *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung* (KAS), the political foundation of the CDU, named after the first German post-war chancellor. While Russia and the former Soviet satellites were not accessible until the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the region became a priority for all German political foundations since then in order to promote political and economic development through dialogue and individual projects, guided by the principle of “strengthening Germany’s bilateral relations through intensive dialogue between elites.”<sup>346</sup> Because the funding for all political foundations has severely been cut since 1992, some foundations were forced to give up permanent representations abroad. Nonetheless, with the priority in the former Soviet region, the KAS has maintained its Moscow office since 1990 but is facing increasing pressure by the Putin government. For example, recently the project leader of the KAS-sponsored EU-Russian dialogue was denied entry to Russia and was informed about a travel ban into Russia until 2020 without any given reason.<sup>347</sup> In addition, the SPD-affiliated *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, as well as the KAS, have been searched and computers have been seized by Russian law enforcement in the wake of a State Duma adopted law that defined nearly all foreign non-governmental organizations as illegal foreign agents.<sup>348</sup> Despite the fact that the allegations against the German political foundations were dropped after the intervention of the German Federal Foreign Office, police raids caused a feeling of insecurity among Russian civil society and German political foundations.

Less a think tank but rather an import platform for the global strategic community is the Munich Security Conference, which was founded by Ewald von Kleist at an international *Wehrkunde* conference in 1963 in order to engage with civil society amid

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<sup>346</sup> Bartsch, “Political Foundations,” 211.

<sup>347</sup> Friedrich Schmidt, “Russland weist KAS-Mitarbeiter an der Grenze ab” [Russia denies entry for KAS-employee at border], *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 19, 2015, accessed May 10, 2015, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/europa/russland-einreiseverbot-fuer-kas-leiter-13437999.htm>.

<sup>348</sup> Johann C. Fuhrmann, “Spione oder Agenten der Zivilgesellschaft? Die Situation der Politischen Stiftungen in Russland” [Spies or agents of civil society? The situation of the political foundation in Russia], *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*, June 14, 2013, <http://www.kas.de/wf/de/33.34710/>.

the creation of the *Bundeswehr*, the integration into NATO, and the promotion of peaceful conflict resolution focusing on the transatlantic dimension.<sup>349</sup> The annual security conference has grown into the German key forum in addressing international security challenges, usually with a high number of representatives from the highest level of decision-making, including head of states and governments. This event in the Bavarian winter offered the *mise en scene* for the shift in German-Russian relations in presentations by Vladimir Putin that at first garnered little notice. The event finds a medial echo in the German press and resembles an opportunity for strategic discussion amongst the experts, but also for possible political statements aimed at the public in Germany. In 2014, Germany's President Joachim Gauck, as well as Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, used the Munich Security Conference to collectively call for a stronger role in international politics with more responsibilities in terms of hard and soft power for Germany. In 2015, German Defense Minister von der Leyen not only explicitly pointed at Moscow's intervention in Ukraine, but in this regard also called for unmasking the "pseudo-historical attacks on the integrity of the Ukraine."<sup>350</sup>

### 3. German-Russian Interests Groups and Their Influence

Besides the academia, think tanks, and mass media, specialized interest groups in society, culture, and economy exert a significant influence on Germany's Russia policy, groups that resemble an additional organized link between society and the government while promoting their individual interests. Opperman and Hoese understand interest groups in this regard as "institutionalized and permanent social merger whose primarily objective is to influence the formation and implementation of universal political decisions in their best interest."<sup>351</sup> Based on the weight of economics in German-Russian relations,

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<sup>349</sup>Munich Security Conference Foundation, "About Us," accessed May 13, 2015, <https://www.securityconference.de/en/about/about-us/>.

<sup>350</sup>Ursula von der Leyen, "Speech by the Federal Minister of Defense, Dr. Ursula von der Leyen on the Occasion of the 51st Munich Security Conference," Munich, Germany, February 6, 2015, [http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/!ut/p/c4/NYvBCsIwEET\\_aDfpTW\\_WgngREUHRdJmCQtNUtZtvfxJofOwIPhMfjC0uRWDk45JzfE\\_uR98MXhrgGiJz4oyS8RPAk722DkKeEj3r3BGNOpJVKsBkwiNMsMGfRqZpFpBhgj72xXWus2WJ\\_u\\_vpeLk2je3O7Q3nGA9\\_o3h5fQ!/](http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/!ut/p/c4/NYvBCsIwEET_aDfpTW_WgngREUHRdJmCQtNUtZtvfxJofOwIPhMfjC0uRWDk45JzfE_uR98MXhrgGiJz4oyS8RPAk722DkKeEj3r3BGNOpJVKsBkwiNMsMGfRqZpFpBhgj72xXWus2WJ_u_vpeLk2je3O7Q3nGA9_o3h5fQ!/).

<sup>351</sup>Oppermann and Hoese, "Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen," 61.

it comes as no surprise that the economic lobby—itself a long-standing and significant part of German politics for more than a century—plays a significant role in developing Germany’s Russia policy, leading Szabo to conclude that “German business remains the key driver of German policy toward Russia.”<sup>352</sup> The *Ostausschuss der Deutschen Wirtschaft* (Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations), described as “a powerful lobby that exercised a significant influence on German policy towards Russia,”<sup>353</sup> is the main lobbyist group and represents the German private economy and industry. Based on customs again reaching back more than a century, titans of industry and trade are engaged in inside lobbying—to influence the political decision-making process via the political establishment directly, but also through outside lobbying—shaping the public opinion, especially by supporting German businesses that invest in Russia. Voicing the ideas and concerns of a large portion of the German economy, the *Ostausschuss*, founded in 1952, encompasses the Federation of German Industries, the Association of German Banks, the German Insurance Association, the Foreign Trade Association of the German Retail Trade, and the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts. Its ranks are further composed of over two hundred companies from the German *Mittelstand* (mostly family-owned, mid-size companies) to stock list major corporations, such as the car manufacturers Daimler, Volkswagen, the *Deutsche Bank*, or Lufthansa.<sup>354</sup> The *Ostausschuss* organizes a wide array of conferences, facilitates dialogue between Russia and Germany, and continuously promotes economic opportunities, but it has also been funding “research and pro-Russian lobbying at one of Germany’s leading think-tanks, the German Council on Foreign Relations,”<sup>355</sup> writes former DGAP researcher Stefan Meister, criticizing the cooperative Russia policy.

In its own introduction, the organization Petersburg Dialogue, initiated by former Chancellor Schroeder and President Putin, states on its website that the “Petersberg

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<sup>352</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 47.

<sup>353</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 80.

<sup>354</sup>Ostausschuss der Deutschen Wirtschaft [Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations], “A Common Initiative of Economic Associations and Enterprises,” accessed May 14, 2015, <http://www.ost-ausschuss.de/a-common-initiative-economic-associations-and-enterprises>.

<sup>355</sup>Meister, “Reframing Germany’s Russia Policy,” 3.

Dialogue was founded in 2011 as German-Russian forum for discussion and promotes the understanding and an open dialogue of both countries between all areas of the civil societies.”<sup>356</sup> The Petersburg Dialogue is patronized by the German chancellor and the Russian president and conducts annual bilateral conferences in Russia or in Germany. In 2014, the annual conference was postponed, and it has been put on hold since then in light of the Ukraine crisis, although the German government’s Russia liaison, Gernot Erler, announced that the dialogue would be continued, though he did not say when.<sup>357</sup> The Petersburg Dialogue faces multiple criticisms, as Szabo points out, that the forum would promote a “business *ueber alles*”<sup>358</sup> (business above all) strategy, avoiding contentious issues, such as rule of law or human rights. Another criticism is that the attendees are selected by the Kremlin, thus ensuring that acritical dialogue cannot take place and reducing it, in Meister’s assessment, to a “‘dialogue’ that legitimizes the Russian status quo.”<sup>359</sup>

Besides the *Ostausschuss* and the Petersburg Dialogue, several other interest and lobby groups exist, such as the non-profit organization German-Russian Forum, as well as regional initiatives. Meanwhile, the *Ostausschuss* remains the most significant interest and lobby group concerning Germany’s Russia policy. According to Opperman and Hoese, the success of lobbying, especially inside lobbying, depends on privileged access to the highest level of political decision-making—a unique characteristic of the *Ostausschuss*, which unites the elite leadership of the German economy.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>356</sup>Petersberg Dialogue, “Ein Forum fuer den Dialog der Zivilgesellschaften” [A forum for the dialogue of the civil societies], accessed May 13, 2015, <http://www.petersburger-dialog.com/ein-forum-fuer-den-dialog-der-zivilgesellschaften>.

<sup>357</sup>“Die Bundesregierung will an Dialog mit Russland festhalten” [The federal government will retain dialogue with Russia], *Die Zeit Online*, March 11, 2015, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-03/bundesregierung-russland-dialog>.

<sup>358</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 51.

<sup>359</sup>Stefan Meister, “Reframing Germany’s Russia Policy,” 4.

<sup>360</sup>Oppermann and Hoese, “Die innenpolitischen Restriktionen,” 63.

#### IV. CASE STUDY: THE ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA

When Russian President Vladimir Putin addressed the Federal Assembly on March 18, 2014, about the annexation of the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as new Russian entities to the Russian Federation, he made clear that “in people’s hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an inseparable part of Russia. This firm conviction is based on truth and justice and was passed from generation to generation, over time, under any circumstances, despite all the dramatic changes our country went through during the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>361</sup> It was a shock that few in Berlin, Paris, and Washington had anticipated, and the subsequent approval of the law, formally annexing Crimea and Sevastopol, shattered the core *entente* of Russia’s relations with the West, especially with the United States and Europe. Most troubling regarding the fate of peace in Europe, however, has been Putin’s blow to the statecraft of Germany. With the record of German-Russian relations in mind—periods of heights and depths, or rather, of cooperation and confrontation having followed each other—the 2014 Ukraine crisis and annexation of Crimea has constituted an event of singular importance unseen since 1989 or even 1945. One cannot refute its consequences for the region, and for Europe as a whole, as well as for the rest of the world. Even as the June 2015 Russian statecraft attempts to return to a friendly normalcy amid the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine, initiated with a shaky ceasefire, the system of international power on the meta-level in Europe seems shaken and in a daze, which may last for years to come. This generalization is especially applicable in terms of the German-Russian relations, personalized in the respective regimes of Chancellor Merkel and President Putin. Although branded by some critics partly as *Russlandversteher* (Russian Firsters), guilty of a knee-jerk apologia, public opinion in Germany has shown a clearer attitude as the crisis matured and became more severe throughout the course of 2014. The results of the 2015 Pew Research concluded that more than 50 percent of Germans favor a tough position against the Kremlin over stronger economic ties with Moscow, which only 35

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<sup>361</sup>Vladimir Putin, “Address by President of Russian Federation,” Official site of the President of Russia, March 18, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.

percent support.<sup>362</sup> On the other hand, according to Russian opinion polls of the Levada Center, in February 2014, 60 percent of Russians saw President Putin in a positive light,<sup>363</sup> and in March 2014, 58 percent of Russians backed military operations in Crimea and other Ukrainian regions.<sup>364</sup> By spring 2015, one year after the annexation, a vast majority of 85 percent of Russians regarded the annexation of the Crimea as irreversible.<sup>365</sup>

In accordance with Putin's March 2014 speech, for many Russians, Crimea and its history has had a highly symbolic relevance since the time of Catherine the Great, as Russians have always perceived the Crimean peninsula as "fundamentally Russian."<sup>366</sup> Indeed, Putin's 2014 annexation was the second formal annexation by Russians, as Catherine II, in pursuit of extending her sovereignty and the rule of Russian power to the South, formally annexed Crimea in 1783. After the raid on Moscow by Crimean Tartars in 1571, and thereafter continuous raids by Crimean Tartars until 1783, the annexation ended the raids on Russians in the southern territories. Russian rule over Crimea following Catherine II's reign enabled the establishment of the Black Sea Fleet and opened possible Russian access to the Mediterranean via the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus Strait—a long-time Russian strategic goal. This southern thrust into Ottoman Europe and into conflict with western powers ultimately also led to the Crimean War of 1853–1856, which ended in a humiliating Russian defeat.<sup>367</sup> One hardly need mention

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<sup>362</sup>Pew Research Center, "Germany and the United States," 11–12.

<sup>363</sup>Levada Center, "Opinion Poll 21–25 February 2014," *Russland Analysen* [Russia analyses] 273, March 14, 2014, 20, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland/pdf/RusslandAnalysen273.pdf>.

<sup>364</sup>Levada Center, "Opinion Poll 7–10 March 2014," *Russland Analysen* [Russia analyses] 273, March 14, 2014, 10, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland/pdf/RusslandAnalysen273.pdf>.

<sup>365</sup>"Die Russland-Ukraine-Krise in russischen Umfragen" [The Russian-Ukraine crisis in Russian opinion polls], *Russland-Analysen* [Russia analyses] 295, May 8, 2015, 15, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland/pdf/RusslandAnalysen295.pdf>.

<sup>366</sup>Kerstin S. Jobst, "Die symbolische Bedeutung der Halbinsel Krim fuer Russland" [The symbolic relevance of the Crimean peninsula for Russia], *Russland-Analysen* [Russia analyses] 291, February 27, 2015, 7, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland/pdf/RusslandAnalysen291.pdf>.

<sup>367</sup>Carolyn Harris, "When Catherine the Great Invaded the Crimea and Put the Rest of the World on Edge," *Smithsonian.com*, March 4, 2014, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/when-catherine-great-invaded-crimea-and-put-rest-world-edge-180949969/?no-ist>.

the role of the Black Sea littoral in the Russian Empire until 1918, or its role in German strategy in Operational Barbarossa and the Axis attempt to destroy the USSR.

When Nikita Khrushchev (who advanced through the ranks of the Ukrainian communist party to become secretary-general of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) transferred Crimea back to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954, the USSR seemed destined to endure, and the resolution of nationalities *problematique* in the frame of Soviet governance made its own sense in the epoch of post Stalinism manifested by Khrushchev. Only the most fanciful Ukrainian nationalist might have imagined that Ukraine would be independent one day and therefore would not align under Moscow's future control. While arbitrariness most likely was not on Khrushchev's mind, the exact reasons remain contested, although it is assessed that infrastructural and economic factors, such as the missing land connection to the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, led to the decision.<sup>368</sup>

During the Cold War, within the Soviet Union, Crimea had become not only a well-known holiday destination, but also the setting of several novels in Russian literature and the 1823 poem by Alexander Pushkin "The Fountain of Bakchisarai" ("The Fountain of Tears"), which made Crimea prominent and supported the Russian idea that Crimea, since the dawn of national consciousness in former times, had always been an integral part of Russia.<sup>369</sup> The general Russian perception of Ukraine as "Little Russia" is widespread among Russian nationalists and especially those who have revived Pan Slavic, romanticist dreams of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, this perception contested by Ukrainians, who addressed "Russification" as a threat to their national identity. Even before 1991, the nationalities policy of the USSR since the 1920s had fostered the "existence of a Ukrainian 'parliament,' a Ukrainian cabinet of ministers, a Ukrainian version of the Soviet flag, even separate Ukrainian membership of the United

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<sup>368</sup>Wilfried Jilge, "Geschichtspolitik statt Voelkerrecht" [History lessons instead of international law], *Russland-Analysen* [Russia analyses] 291, February 27, 2015, 3, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland/pdf/RusslandAnalysen291.pdf>.

<sup>369</sup>Jobst, "Die symbolische Bedeutung," 7.

Nations.”<sup>370</sup> This policy comprised further the move of the capital from the Russian-dominated Eastern city of Kharkiv to the city of Kiev in Western Ukraine in 1934.

By 1989, 73 percent of people living in Ukraine were ethnically Ukrainian, while 22 percent were ethnically Russian and dominated the eastern and southeastern parts of Ukraine. Such a mixture of nationalities was typical in Tsarist Russia because the same was true in all the multinational empires of Eastern Europe. This ethnic distribution did not, however, correlate with the attendance of language schools, as “47.5% of schoolchildren studied in Ukrainian language schools, . . . [and] 47% in their Soviet-Russian counterparts. In Galicia, the number in Ukrainian language schools was around 90%, in the Donbas it was less than 10% and in Crimea zero.”<sup>371</sup> The people in Crimea, and especially the Crimean Tatars, who had been widely deported in 1944 because of their alleged collaboration with the Germans during World War II, have been ruled by different nations as a result of war, “from the Russian Empire to the Austro-Hungarian Empire to Poland to the Soviet Union,”<sup>372</sup> and now again Russia. When in 1954 Crimea became part of Ukraine, no Ukrainian cultural institutions existed at all in Crimea; thus, the dominant cultural identity that evolved until 1991 was described by Andrew Wilson as “Russo-Soviet . . . [with a] Russian majority that inhabited Crimea in 1991.”<sup>373</sup>

Ukrainian independence had been an objective since the interlude of such freedom from Tsarist rule in the wake of the Central Power victory against Russia in early 1918. This sentiment was especially rooted in the Western parts of Ukraine where existed a Polish and Habsburg tradition, and was especially prevalent in the dissident movements of the 1960s and 1970s when the Soviet KGB ensured that half of the political prisoners in the Soviet Union came from Ukraine.<sup>374</sup> In 1991, after the Ukrainian parliament chose national independence with an overwhelming 346 to 1 vote, the population confirmed the vote on December 1, 1991, with the 90.3 percent majority

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<sup>370</sup>Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, CT; London, UK: Yale University Press, 2009), 147.

<sup>371</sup>Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 148.

<sup>372</sup>Harris, “When Catherine the Great Invaded the Crimea.”

<sup>373</sup>Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 151.

<sup>374</sup>*Ibid.*, 153.



the decision to secede from the Soviet Union, even with 54 percent in Crimea favoring Ukrainian independence.<sup>375</sup> Due to the turmoil in Moscow and the weak Soviet position in 1991 after the attempted coup in Moscow, the Ukrainians gained the opportunity to declare independence—an opportunity the former chairman of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet, Leonid Kravchuk, executed August 24, 1991. Regarding Ukraine’s legacy since 1917 and in the Soviet Union, it is noteworthy that Ukraine in “its post-war boundaries had never existed as a national unit or achieved effective independence,”<sup>376</sup> one source of the current conflict’s origin. This signifies why it is difficult “east of Kiev and west of the Volga . . . to identify who is a Ukrainian and who is a Russian” after multiple centuries of interaction.<sup>377</sup>

Whether Crimea belongs to Russia by dint of international law, the peninsula has a major strategic relevance for Russia, especially for the Russian Navy. The Black Sea Fleet, which has been in the harbor of Sevastopol since the first annexation of Catherine II in the eighteenth century, has been the hallmark of world power and the capacity of Russia to exert its influence in the international system of states against the old empires and then against NATO in the 1970s with the rise of the Soviet fleet. The Russian-Ukrainian agreement for the lease of Sevastopol and other military bases in Crimea was supposed to end in 2017 and had been on the diplomatic agenda between Moscow and Kiev for quite a while. Only with the election of well-known Victor Yanukovych in 2010, and a subsequent reorientation towards Moscow, was a new lease agreement signed in April 2010, which prolonged the usage of the bases for another twenty-five years (until 2042) and which narrowed Ukraine’s NATO membership probabilities.<sup>378</sup> With the Russian 2014 annexation, the future of the Black Sea Fleet has been secured, and former Ukrainian limitations on the fleet size are not applicable anymore. The Russian defense

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<sup>375</sup>Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 161+169.

<sup>376</sup>Malia, *Soviet Tragedy*, 439.

<sup>377</sup>Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 216.

<sup>378</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 228; Andrei P. Tsygankov, “Foreign Policy,” in *Return to Putin’s Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren, 5th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), 248.

minister announced in 2014, shortly after the annexation in March, that Russia plans to strengthen the Black Sea Fleet by thirty additional vessels by 2020.<sup>379</sup>

Former Ukrainian Prime Minister Victor Yanukovych was on the presidential election ballot in 2004 when the Russian-backed candidate for the office of the Ukrainian president lost to Victor Yushchenko in the so-called Orange Revolution, a continuation of the spirit of 1989 closer to Moscow than in the capitals of Central Europe, which meant less to Russian ideas of great power and power overall. After the first round of elections in October 2004 led to a close tie between Yanukovych and Yushchenko, “authorities had decided that Yanukovych was going to win”<sup>380</sup> and declared 49.5 percent of the votes in favor of Yanukovych versus 46.6 percent for Yushchenko. Massive allegations of electoral fraud initiated large-scale protests with more than five hundred thousand people protesting the outcome of the elections peacefully in a carnival-like atmosphere centered around Kiev’s Maidan Place. Under pressure from the public, the Ukrainian Supreme Court, on December 3, 2004, condemned the elections and ruled that a third round of elections would be held on December 26, 2004. Victor Yushchenko won with 51.2 percent of the votes.<sup>381</sup> However, Yushchenko appointing Yulia Tymoschenko as Ukraine’s first female prime minister did not lead to unity but to accusations of corruption, which created severe divisions among the parties of the Orange Revolution. Consequently, the Ukrainian political establishment became preoccupied with internal affairs of power and influence instead of addressing the enormous consequences of the economic and financial crisis in 2008. Despite the pro-Western ambitions under Yushchenko’s presidency—with NATO membership aspirations and the development of closer relations to the European Union, Ukrainians voted for Victor Yanukovych in 2010 because they were tired of scandal-ridden internal political affairs, the nation’s stagnation in the rigors of the free market, and the debris in eastern Europe after the world economic crisis. Ukrainians voted for the pro-Russian candidate in light of the Ukrainian economic

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<sup>379</sup>Matthew Bodner, “Russia Extends Grasp over Black Sea, into Med,” *Defense News*, April 12, 2015, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/show-daily/sea-air-space/2015/04/12/russia-black-sea-mediterranean-navy-fleet-crimea-sevastopol/25477449/>.

<sup>380</sup>Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 318.

<sup>381</sup>*Ibid.*, 320.

decline, but also under the impression of the Russo-Georgian War of 2008. For the Kremlin, the 2010 change of government in Ukraine—and thus the end of Ukraine’s Orange Revolution—meant a chance for rapprochement with the West because the United States had acknowledged the elections in Ukraine as free and fair, thus signaling Moscow to accept the electoral outcome.<sup>382</sup>

Moscow had openly supported status quo candidates in Georgia and Ukraine. Therefore, the so-called “color revolutions” in Georgia and Ukraine came as a shock to the decision-makers in the Kremlin. These shocks automatically defined the Russian position as opposition to the new governments, especially because President Putin had personally promoted Yanukovich’s first presidential bid in 2004.<sup>383</sup> In light of the former Soviet zone of influence—the “near abroad”—Putin saw a red line overstepped with Yushchenko’s announcement to aspire to NATO membership, which was answered by NATO at the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest and led to the declaration, pushed by the Bush Administration, that “NATO welcomes Ukraine’s and Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO.”<sup>384</sup> The tide had turned, and Russia’s quasi-silence, or more or less passive acquiescence, to the course of NATO enlargement since 1995 turned to violence and aggression.

Only months after NATO’s 2008 Bucharest summit, Russian troops intervened in the Georgian province of South Ossetia, claiming to protect Russian citizens, which had their residences in South Ossetia, and sparked the Russo-Georgian War. Russia’s decisive action in Georgia caught the West by surprise, but it did not lead to a change of foreign policy towards Russia, as most nations, including Germany, after condemning the Russian intervention, went back to business as usual.<sup>385</sup> Georgia was too far away, and

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<sup>382</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 223–24.

<sup>383</sup>*Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>384</sup>North Atlantic Council, “Bucharest Summit Declaration,” April 3, 2008, last updated May 8, 2014, par. 23, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_8443.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm).

<sup>385</sup>Adomeit, “German-Russian Relations,” 6.

the world's attention was presently mesmerized by the collapsing stock exchanges and the ongoing situation in Iraq.

In Crimea, the number of Russians had been growing over the years, especially between 1994 and 2004 when Russia had given citizenship to Ukrainians in Crimea.<sup>386</sup> In 2008 after the Russo-Georgian War, Allison wrote that the Russian modulation of post-Soviet borders in the Caucasus had a threatening connotation for political leaders in Kiev, who rightly feared that Moscow might use the Russian population in Crimea as a pretext for coming “to their ‘defence’ in some future crisis. Such a move would partly stall the withdrawal of the Black Sea fleet from Sevastopol or more broadly to impede Ukraine’s progression to NATO membership.”<sup>387</sup> The close geographical neighborhood, the personal interlinkage between Ukrainians and Russians, the cross-border trade and cross-cultural relations between Russia and Ukraine (where the East Slavic culture has its roots), makes independent Ukraine, among the former Soviet republics, the most important country for Russia. In addition, the strategic geographical and political position between Russia and Europe, but also between Russia and the Mediterranean Sea, assigns Ukraine (in the Russian perspective) the function of “either a bridge between Russia and Europe or a wall dividing them, [but nevertheless] Ukraine’s geopolitical orientation will always have profound effect on Russia’s relations with its Western neighbors.”<sup>388</sup> With the 2014 annexation of Crimea, Putin has proven that he is more willing and capable than he was in 2008 to take strong measures—including all aspects of irregular and covert warfare—to ensure Russian national interests in the near abroad; the question currently at hand is whether the Russian decision to wreck the relations with the West was worth this course of action.

The following chapter IV outlines major actors and the parameters of Russian foreign policy, focusing on the relevance of the near abroad, as well as relations to Ukraine. The chapter further interprets the aims of such policy to point out some factors

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<sup>386</sup>Roy Allison, “Russia Resurgent? Moscow’s Campaign to ‘Coerce Georgia to Peace,’” *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (November, 2008): 1168, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25144986>.

<sup>387</sup>Ibid.

<sup>388</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 223.

of Russian foreign policy formation, despite its opaqueness, before evaluating the events that led to the annexation of Crimea, depicting the international and German reactions to the annexation, and in the end, elaborating on whether Putin's power-play decisions pay off.

## **A. RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY**

When Vladimir Putin succeeded Boris Yeltsin as Russian president in January 2000, the country was “chaotic and collapsing,”<sup>389</sup> and preoccupied with its domestic challenges. In the minds of the Russian people, Putin came at the right time: Russians were longing for an authoritarian president like him to bring order, stability, and international recognition back to Russia and its society.<sup>390</sup> Within the constitutional structures of the Russian presidential system, Putin started in 2000 “to restore the effectiveness of state power in all spheres of life . . . eliminating the centers of power that had begun to compete with the Kremlin for resources and political influence.”<sup>391</sup> This push to power included the regional governors, the State Duma, the oligarchs, and independent parties and organizations outside the Kremlin's control. The president started his redefinition of the center-periphery relations in times when the Russian economy recovered and began to prosper due to increasing oil prices, which affected Russia's approach to international affairs.

Russian foreign policy can be seen only in the context of the Soviet Union's disintegration since 1989 and its earlier legacy as a European and Eurasian great power, starting from the medieval times of Kievan Rus and through the 1980s. While from 1945 until 1989 the world was characterized by the bipolarity of the two super powers—United States and Soviet Union—the rump of Russia as heir to the USSR faced severe domestic turmoil in post-Soviet times, beginning in the early 1990s. This turmoil led to the perception that Russia was internationally weak. Russians themselves were aware of their diminished power as the U.S. emerged dominant, acknowledging as late or early as 2008

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<sup>389</sup>Wegren, *Return to Putin's Russia*, 11.

<sup>390</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>391</sup>Olga Kryzhanovskaya and Stephan White, “The Sovietization of Russian Politics,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 25, no. 4 (2009): 284, doi: 10.2747/1060-586X.24.4.283.

that Russia was not a superpower, but it nurtured the aim to become so again, a fact obscured prior to 2008.<sup>392</sup> A challenging process of Russian self-definition at home and abroad finally led circles around Putin to “the determination to restore Russia as an independent international actor whose interests remained distinct from those of the liberal capitalist West.”<sup>393</sup> In the wake of all that followed, from the Georgian War to the Ukrainian War in the seven years since 2008, there has been widespread consensus in Russia that one central goal of Russia’s foreign policy is to regain and retain the ability to act as a great power within a global order; Russia sees itself as having a dominant role in the direct vicinity of the post-Soviet region.<sup>394</sup> This decision constitutes a diplomatic revolution that puts the post-1989 European order into question and poses an existential challenge to German foreign and security policy, which has long-assumed that no such post-imperial ambitions might operate from Moscow.

### **1. Major Actors in Russian Foreign Policy: The Dominant Role of the Kremlin and the *Siloviki***

Russia’s Constitution of 1993 states in Article 80 that “the President of the Russian Federation shall be the Head of State,” and Article 86 determines that the President shall “govern the foreign policy of the Russian Federation . . . [and] hold negotiations and sign international treaties and agreements of the Russian Federation.”<sup>395</sup> The strong position of the president includes, besides governing foreign policy, several principal responsibilities, such as to “determine the basic objectives of the internal and foreign policy of the state, . . . approve the military doctrine, . . . direct the foreign policy, [and act as] the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.”<sup>396</sup> The presidential powers are tightened by the possibility of ruling by decree, which encompasses the same power as laws until confirmed by the legislation, thus giving the president the power to rule and enact laws besides or in parallel with the State Duma,

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<sup>392</sup>Wipperfuerth, *Russlands Aussenpolitik*, 129.

<sup>393</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 11.

<sup>394</sup>Wipperfuerth, *Russlands Aussenpolitik*, 121.

<sup>395</sup>“The Constitution of Russia,” President of Russia, article 80+86, accessed March 22, 2015, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/articles/ConstIntro01.shtml>.

<sup>396</sup>“Constitution of Russia,” article 80+83+86-87.

something that was not as necessary under Putin's aligned Federal Assembly as during Yeltsin's presidency.

Putin learned his own acute lessons from the Yeltsin legacy, and in order to act with the support of the Russian legislation—having been strongly influenced by Yeltsin's Presidency—Putin engaged in aligning the Federal Assembly to his ends in a kind of presidential authoritarianism not unlike De Gaulle, but also in a profoundly different spirit than the Fifth Republic in the 1960s. By bringing United Russia in line with the decisions of the Kremlin and re-introducing the functions of bureaucratization, as well as the career function of the party, Putin succeeded in dominating the main parliamentary party of the Duma. Party membership in United Russia rose immensely, as the party was to facilitate the entry of state officials into political representative institutions across Russia at all levels.<sup>397</sup> United Russia became an instrument of Putin's power structure, especially because most members of the inner circle closest to the president are not members of the party, having consolidated their power positions, and thus are not in need of additional protection through the party affiliation, which is supposed to signal loyalty to the authorities—that is, to Putin.<sup>398</sup> Although, the majorities in the Duma were changing with the subsequent Duma elections, in the sixth Duma as of December 4, 2011, Putin keeps a stable majority with 53 percent for United Russia until 2017 as a result of the latest parliamentary election.<sup>399</sup> Additionally, one of the first reforms Putin engaged in when he came to power was a reform of the Upper House—the Federation Council—where two representatives from each federal region were elected. However, as the Constitution did not define the selection process, the Kremlin proposed to appoint the respective members of the Federation Council, as opposed to electoral representation or personal representation by the elected regional governor.<sup>400</sup> The change was adopted in

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<sup>397</sup>Kryshtanovskaya and White, "Sovietization of Russian Politics," 291.

<sup>398</sup>Ibid.

<sup>399</sup>Thomas Remington, "Parliament and the Dominant Party Regime," in *Return to Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren, 5th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 55.

<sup>400</sup>Michael McFaul and Nikolai Petrov, "Elections," in *Between Dictatorship and Democracy: Russian Post-Communist Political Reform*, ed. Michel McFaul et al. (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004), 50.

July 2000 when the governors lost their automatic representation and weakened another important check on presidential power, while at the same time the Kremlin increased its access to security organs, achieving the full federal control over all military, police, and security organs in the regions by 2002.<sup>401</sup> This *coup de main* left the regional governors at the disposal of the Kremlin and undermined the legitimacy of the Federation Council; thus, it is no surprise that since then, “the Federation Council has voted . . . for all of the president’s initiatives,”<sup>402</sup> granting President Putin ultimately the central decision-making power in foreign policy as well in domestic affairs.

Although the president is head of nation state, the prime minister is head of the government, which encompasses a number of federal ministries, but also multiple federal agencies, like the Federal Migration Service. However, all security- and intelligence-related agencies, such as the Federal Intelligence Agency or the Federal Security Agency, report directly to the president.<sup>403</sup> The prime minister, currently the former president, Medvedev, is also appointed by the president and confirmed by the State Duma. The prime minister’s role in foreign policy is not as strong as the president’s; nevertheless, he oversees the actual implementation of domestic and foreign policy, as well as of financial and monetary policy, prepares the federal budget, and is responsible for the rule of law and ensuring human rights. With the centrality of presidential powers, Putin, since 2000, has repeatedly stated that “he himself, the president—as foreseen in the Constitution—determines the country’s foreign policy.”<sup>404</sup>

Mankoff argues that it is difficult to determine who exactly makes foreign policy in Russia, due to the fact that, in 1991, Russia had to start from scratch to develop its foreign policy institutions and underwent a time of weakness. The upshot of this period has been the centralization of decision-making power in the Kremlin by small, elite

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<sup>401</sup>Nikolai Petrov and Darrell Slider, “Regional Politics,” in *Return to Putin’s Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren, 5th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 73.

<sup>402</sup>Remington, “Parliament and the Dominant Party Regime,” 47.

<sup>403</sup> Government of the Russian Federation, “The Russian Government: Structure: Ministries and Agencies,” May 20, 2015, <http://government.ru/en/ministries/>.

<sup>404</sup>Wipperfuerth, *Russlands Aussenpolitik*, 58.



circles.<sup>405</sup> These elite circles have been increasingly dominated by the appointments of *siloviki*, that is, those quite at odds with a western orientation and with no love for the ideal of checks and balances. Loyalty and personal trust in and to Putin and vice versa also seemed to be why why Putin relied heavily on keeping like-minded people around him, the so-called *siloviki*, the men of the security branches, the intelligence services, and the military who since 2000 have done their best to restore their power lost in the years since 1991.<sup>406</sup> While Putin reduced the power of the Oligarchs in politics, the *siloviki* remained the most relevant and largest part of Putin's inner "circle of trust," as even senior officials without the "force ministry background" within the presidential administration were not admitted to the exclusive decision-making circle in Putin's immediate vicinity.<sup>407</sup> The strong relations between newly generated wealth and the power circle around the Russian president, which were set up by the oligarchs under Yeltsin's administration in the 1990s, was taken over by the *siloviki*, making them the new and powerful elite in Moscow, in particular because the expanded authority to the secret services after 1991, which include the task to "suppress political dissent at home," has not been recalled.<sup>408</sup> Under Putin, the *siloviki* representation among the Russian political elite has risen constantly, and after 2008 reached 67 percent within the ranks of the national leadership and 32 percent average across the executive and legislative branches.<sup>409</sup>

The Duma Committee of International Affairs, headed by Alexander Pushkov, a member of United Russia, does not play a significant role in actual foreign policy-making in Russia but supports the views and the implementation of the Russian president. In a similar role, the Russian "Foreign Ministry has also become rather peripheral in terms of setting a strategic course," as Putin's Foreign Ministers Igor Ivanov and Sergei Lavrov, the latter since 2004, have not articulated their own strong charismatic views on Russian

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<sup>405</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 53.

<sup>406</sup>Richard Sakwa, "Political Leadership," 32.

<sup>407</sup>Kryshtanovskaya and White, "Sovietization of Russian Politics," 294.

<sup>408</sup>David E. Hoffman, *The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), XII+XIV.

<sup>409</sup>Kryshtanovskaya and White, "Sovietization of Russian Politics," 295.

foreign policy. Under the rigidity of Putin's reign in the Kremlin, "Lavrov's role has been principally to implement the concepts developed"<sup>410</sup> by the President and his closest advisors. The last player in foreign policy in Moscow is the Federal Security Council, whose importance has reemerged under the current chairman, former director of the FSB, Nikolai Patrushev.<sup>411</sup> As part of the presidential administration, the Federal Security Council is responsible for drafting policy to defend "the vital interests of individuals, society and the state against internal or external threats. The Council also helps determine a uniform state policy on security and helps ensure the President's ability to carry out his constitutional duties."<sup>412</sup> Under the chairmanship of the *siloviki* Patrushev, the Federal Security Council is also responsible for overseeing the work of the "entire national security bureaucracy on behalf of the presidential administration,"<sup>413</sup> basically making it the control and strategic planning muscle of the Russian President.

To conclude, with the increasing authoritarian political structures in Russia since the second incumbency of Putin, and increasingly massing of decisive powers in the president, Putin can exercise his powers nearly unchecked by parliament, as long as the *siloviki*, his "circle of trust," supports the president and their widespread appointment to function in the system supports the "managed democracy." Despite the 2011 protests in Moscow's streets, which appeared to herald a kind of Orange Revolution in the metropole, the dominant role of the Kremlin and the elite circles of *siloviki* remain currently uncontested, if not ameliorated among rising nationalism in regards to the Ukraine crisis and the annexation of Crimea.

## **2. Parameters and Interests of Russian Foreign Policy**

The past is witness to Russia's former status as a great power, which was only challenged and changed through the defeat in Crimea in 1856, the Russo-Turkish War in 1876, the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, and, most

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<sup>410</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 55.

<sup>411</sup>Ibid.

<sup>412</sup>"Security Council," President of Russia, accessed May 19, 2015, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/articles/institut04.shtml>.

<sup>413</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 55–56.

significantly, the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. Nonetheless, from the time of its victory over the Swedes in the Northern War through World War II, Russia and the Soviet Union were part of the five great European powers, which then became the bipolar order of the Cold War.

As victor of World War II and a superpower during the Cold War, Russia played an important part as a global power, able to shape international order through its participation, power, and energetic defiance of the United States and its European and Asian allies. The historic subsequence of enormous influence and power, followed by total defeat or collapse in 1989–1991, is perceived by observers of Moscow as one reason for the inherent fear of Russia’s political elite for Russia’s survival and territorial integrity.<sup>414</sup> After the end of the Soviet Union in 1991, new independent nations evolved around Russia, which depend substantially on Russia, especially in terms of trade and energy. These nations also contain a large number of Ethnic-Russians residing in these countries. This issue mirrors the multinational character of Tsarist Russia and later the Soviet Union, but also the classic Eastern European multinational empires, which expired in 1918–1919 with a catastrophic legacy in the years 1919–1989.

In retrospect, Russia’s foreign policy has not always been as violent or as truculent as it has grown to be in the last couple years. Too quickly forgotten since Crimea is the fact that Putin, in his first term as Russian president, understood the “importance of social and economic recovery as a prerequisite for the more active foreign policy.”<sup>415</sup> The Kremlin engaged in pro-west and pro-US rapprochement, and even spoke about closer relations to the European Union until mid-2001.<sup>416</sup> However, with the western critique of Russia’s brutal warfare in Chechnya, and as Putin and Medvedev believed at the time that the U.S. tried to exploit the Russian accommodation in order to strengthen the U.S. position in relation to Russia, the Kremlin chose a more aggressive

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<sup>414</sup>Thomas Graham, “The Sources of Russia’s Insecurity,” *Survival* 52, no. 1 (February/March 2010): 60, doi: 10.1080/00396331003612471.

<sup>415</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 42.

<sup>416</sup>Wipperfuerth, “Russlands Aussenpolitik,” 59.

path, which temporarily peaked in the Russo-Georgian War of 2008.<sup>417</sup> The Russians also exploited the apparent retreat of the U.S. from the post-2001 offensive against global terror because the Russian side understood the institutional limitations of NATO enlargement and the failings of this policy in the security sector of those states (e.g., Georgia) under the eye of Moscow.

Russia's claims for its core sphere of influence—the near abroad—coincides with the former Soviet republics, or, as Medvedev has defined, “Russia’s ‘traditional sphere of interests’ more broadly to include neighbor states with which it has traditionally had close relations.”<sup>418</sup> After the events of the Russo-Georgian War in August 2008, then-President Medvedev, in a TV interview on August 31, 2008, named five principles that would guide Russian foreign policy action in the future, defining “privileged interests,” which was confirmed in the 2009 National Security Strategy to 2020, stating that Russia’s interest “was the protection of Russian citizens in the so-called ‘near abroad.’”<sup>419</sup> Two of these principles reflect the Russian considerations and aspirations for regional dominance in that “Russia considers it a priority to protect Russians wherever they may be . . . [and] Russia has privileged interests in certain regions.”<sup>420</sup> This ideal, along with its associations with Pan Slavism, the Holy Alliance, the Comintern, and the Warsaw Pact, cannot help but unsettle Russia’s neighbors within easy reach of the reviving Russian military power.

The influence of the *siloviki* was obvious in such a policy, calling for a prioritization of dominance in the post-Soviet region over multilateral approaches in international relations with countries outside the former Soviet Union. Regarding Ukraine and Georgia, the assertion of Russia’s privileged interests could be interpreted as a message to the West not to interfere in what had once been a Europe between the great powers laden with explosive instability. After NATO’s Bucharest summit in 2008, where

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<sup>417</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 87.

<sup>418</sup>Allison, “Russia Resurgent,” 1167.

<sup>419</sup>Marcel de Haas, “Medvedev’s Security Policy: A Provisional Assessment,” *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 62 (June 18, 2009): 3, <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-62.pdf>.

<sup>420</sup>*Ibid.*

the prospect of NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia was announced, Putin stated that Russia “view[s] the appearance of a powerful military bloc on our borders . . . as a direct threat to the security of our country.”<sup>421</sup> However, neither Russian use of force as against Georgia in 2008, energy crisis and cut-offs with Ukraine, nor trade embargos have led to a stronger Russian influence in the near abroad, but on the opposite “reinforced local elites’ desire for greater distance from Moscow.”<sup>422</sup> This phenomenon has become only more intense in the wake of the Crimean annexation.

The declared Ukrainian will to aspire to NATO membership, especially in the midst of the domestic turbulence that led to the Maidan protests in 2013–2014, was perceived by the Russians as threatening in a new quality of urgency. While Russia was basically compensated by the West for the first round of NATO enlargement in 1999, the second round in 2004 ignited heavy opposition among the Russian elite, especially within the military, in that the Baltic States were a core part of the former Soviet Union. This fact led Yeltsin to declare that the accession of the Baltic States into NATO would overstep a red line.<sup>423</sup> Paralleling naïve hopes that Russia would overcome its anger about NATO’s enlargement, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov warned that Russia would not easily accept permanent deploying of missile defense infrastructure. Consequently, when Poland announced the bilateral agreement between Warsaw and Washington to host an interceptor system for missile defense and Patriot air defense units on a rotational basis in Poland, a Russian general allegedly threatened Poland indirectly with the possibility of nuclear retaliation.<sup>424</sup> Mankoff argued that, by ignoring Russian objections about NATO enlargement eastwards, the second round of NATO ascension prepared the path to the Russo-Georgian conflict in 2008.<sup>425</sup>

The new Russian Military Doctrine, published in 2010, mirrors the belief among the Russian elite that continued NATO enlargement is perceived as an omnipresent

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<sup>421</sup>Tsygankov, “Foreign Policy,” 237.

<sup>422</sup>Graham, “Sources of Russia’s Insecurity,” 64.

<sup>423</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 159.

<sup>424</sup>*Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>425</sup>*Ibid.*, 161.

danger. While differentiating between dangers and threats (the latter being the developmental consequence of the first), the doctrine defines the external military dangers as “the desire to endow the force potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with global functions carried out in violation of the norms of international law and to move the military infrastructure of NATO member countries closer to the borders of the Russian Federation, including by expanding the bloc.”<sup>426</sup> Russian politicians since 1997, but even more since Putin’s assumption of power, have repeatedly spoken out against NATO enlargement or further development of missile defense, and even responded with decisive actions like with the military intervention in Georgia in 2008 or the confirmed deployment of mobile short range ballistic missile (SRBM) systems Iskander to Kaliningrad in 2013.<sup>427</sup> NATO’s enlargement is seen not only as a military threat, but also as a competitor over trade relations in Eastern and Central Europe because meeting the preconditions for NATO accession will automatically lead to an alignment of values and interests, but also to technical modernization, from which Russia would be excluded.

A similar perception can be observed in Russia concerning the European Union. Even before ten former post-Soviet sphere nations had joined the EU,<sup>428</sup> the Kremlin feared that the European Union’s approach would undermine Moscow’s influence; however, the EU was not perceived as posing a threat to Russia’s ability to exert influence and power in the region.<sup>429</sup> In 2003, the EU introduced the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), which was supposed to replace the bilateral approach to a unified strategy for eastern and southern neighbors. Russia refused to become part of the ENP in 2003, and Moscow condemned the Eastern Partnership in May 2008, explicitly aimed at six nations, foremost Ukraine, out of fear of losing Russia’s sphere of influence

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<sup>426</sup>Carnegie Endowment, “Text of Newly-Approved Russian Military Doctrine,” February 5, 2010, accessed May 19, 2015, [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia\\_military\\_doctrine.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf).

<sup>427</sup>Andrew Roth, “Deployment of Missiles Is Confirmed by Russia,” *New York Times*, December 16, 2013, [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/17/world/europe/russia-deploys-missiles-in-western-region.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/17/world/europe/russia-deploys-missiles-in-western-region.html?_r=0).

<sup>428</sup>These nations include Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

<sup>429</sup>Mankoff, “Relations with the European Union,” 287.

to a newly Europeanized adjacent realm.<sup>430</sup> With heightened controversy about Ukraine between Russia and the EU, it becomes ultimately a litmus test for the post-Soviet order in Eastern and Central Europe in that “Russia . . . remains wary of what it sees as attempts to reorient these states away from Moscow.”<sup>431</sup> Since Yeltsin’s presidency, Russian politicians have believed in their “right to participate in decisions affecting east-central Europe’s security.”<sup>432</sup> In this regard, the former British ambassador in Moscow, Sir Roderic Lyne, predicts that “Russia would exert itself mightily, risk a great deal and pay a high price to prevent Ukraine from becoming, as Russians would see it, a platform for American power.”<sup>433</sup> Russia perceives that “both the EU and NATO sometimes appear merely tools of an expanded, aggressive West that has not fully broken with the Cold War-era logic of containment and continues to see Russia as a potential danger.”<sup>434</sup>

The current basic goals of Russia’s foreign policy are stated in the “Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 2013,” which states that Russian foreign policy aims to ensure “the security of the country . . . and securing its high standing in the international community as one of the influential and competitive poles of the modern world”<sup>435</sup> while actively promoting international peace based upon international law in order to establish a “democratic system of international relations . . . [and create] favorable external conditions for a steady and dynamic growth of the Russian economy and its technological modernization.”<sup>436</sup> The concept also addresses tensions in the near abroad by defining the promotion of “good-neighborly relations with adjoining states and helping to overcome existing and prevent potential tensions and conflicts in regions

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<sup>430</sup>Mankoff, “Relations with the European Union,” 288–89.

<sup>431</sup>*Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>432</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 208.

<sup>433</sup>Roderic Lyne, “Reading Russia, Rewiring the West,” *ODR Russia and Beyond*, October 12, 2008, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/Russia/article/Reading-Russia-Rewiring-the-West>.

<sup>434</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 174.

<sup>435</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, “Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation,” February 12, 2013, 4a-i, [http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D).

<sup>436</sup>*Ibid.*

adjacent to the Russian Federation,”<sup>437</sup> which is one of the goals of current Russian foreign policy. At the same time, it mentions protecting of “rights and legitimate interests of Russian citizens and compatriots residing abroad.”<sup>438</sup> The protection of Russians in the near abroad, as stated by Medvedev in wake of the Russo-Georgian War and as written in the new foreign policy concept, has been used to the Russian intervention in Georgia’s provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia circa 2008, and has been cited in the enduring Ukraine crisis from 2013 onwards.

Russia’s foreign policy objective remains “the enhancement of competitiveness in order to promote its global influence and ensure the stability of the system.”<sup>439</sup> In other words, by retaining regional dominance in political and economic terms, Russia wants to take its place at the table in order to ensure stability at home and influence abroad and thus shape the order of business in the near abroad. At the same time, Russia would be able to modernize Russia’s economy as competitive on a global scale and employ the instruments of soft and hard power. With the current path of Russia foreign policy having culminated in the annexation of Crimea, supported by propagandistic media campaigns and “fueled by revisionist nationalism, a newly resurgent Russia appears determined to keep Europe and the United States out of its ‘near abroad,’ all while doing business with the West.”<sup>440</sup>

### **3. Domestic Influence on Foreign Policy in Russia**

The precondition for Mankoff’s assessment of foreign policy formation in Russia—that “a narrow elite may make foreign policy, but the wider public constraints the range of choices available to that elite”<sup>441</sup>—is based on the consumption and availability of objective information as found in modern societies with sophisticated media on the western model. With the instruments to project and exercise power internally and externally, especially in the context of the capabilities of the security

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<sup>437</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, “Concept of the Foreign Policy,” 4d.

<sup>438</sup>Ibid., 4g.

<sup>439</sup>Wipperfuert, *Russlands Aussenpolitik* [Russian Foreign Policy], 121.

<sup>440</sup>Constanze Stelzenmueller, “Germany’s Russia Question: A New Ostpolitik for Europe,” 90.

<sup>441</sup>Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 53.



services, the Putin administration reversed the development of the open media landscape in Russia after 2000. While under Yeltsin, Russian media was developing according to Western editorial standards of independence, including private ownership with prospects of advertising revenues. But the Putin administration began interfering in the editorial work, as well as using coercion to change media coverage according to the guidance of the Kremlin. After media coverage of the Kursk submarine catastrophe, the terrorist attack on the Dubrovka Theater, and the Beslan school attack in 2004, which suggested deficiencies in the executive branch, the government secured full control of all three major TV channels in Russia by the end of 2004.<sup>442</sup> The example of the TV channels in Russia, which play an important part in the political development of a nation, effectively show the use “as tools to shape public perceptions in a way best suited to the Kremlin’s goals,”<sup>443</sup> thus leading Ryabov to conclude that the authoritarian media environment in Russia reversed the function of the media to the same role it had in the Soviet Union: “the government’s propaganda apparatus,”<sup>444</sup> ensuring a content population that supports governmental decisions and promotes the popularity of the Russian President. As in former times, “any real or imagined problem can be spun by Russia’s ‘political technologists,’”<sup>445</sup> the equivalent of western “spin doctors.”

However, the development of a Russian middle class centered in Russia’s major cities led to the desire for more liberalization and critique of Putin’s increasingly authoritarian reign, but also for a higher standard of living. After the 2011 presidential elections, large protests against the government erupted in Moscow and other major cities as allegations of election fraud arose.<sup>446</sup> It is in these large cities where the younger generation increasingly advances with social media and better paid jobs than in Russia’s

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<sup>442</sup>Maria Lipman, “The Media and Political Developments,” in *Between Dictatorship and Democracy: Russian Post-Communist Political Reform*, ed. Michael McFaul et al. (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004), 131.

<sup>443</sup>Lipman, “Media and Political Developments,” 133.

<sup>444</sup>Andrei Ryabov, “The Mass Media,” in *Between Dictatorship and Democracy: Russian Post-Communist Political Reform*, ed. Michael McFaul et al. (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004), 194.

<sup>445</sup> Mikhail Tsyarkin, “Russian Politics, Policy-Making and American Missile Defence,” *International Affairs* 85, no. 4 (2009): 782, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27695090>.

<sup>446</sup>Tsygankov, “Foreign Policy,” 240.

rural regions, and where living conditions differ significantly from the larger cities. The latest protests in Russia, which erupted over the election fraud, have been the outcry of a minority, according to Evans, who concluded that “in Russia today those that are most dissatisfied with the Putin regime have not yet linked up with the majority of the Russian people.”<sup>447</sup> As recent opinion polls in Russia show, a strong majority backs Russia’s aggressive foreign policy, with approval rates having risen from 69 percent in 2012 to 83 percent in 2014 in favor of Putin’s foreign policy.<sup>448</sup>

A major domestic factor, if not *the* major factor, is the Russian economy. After the Russian gross domestic product (GDP) fell 50 percent from 1990 to 1995, inflation spiked and unemployment rose. While Russia acquired enormous debt, the recovery of the economy coincided with Putin’s rise to president.<sup>449</sup> Due to high oil prices, which peaked at more than 140 U.S. dollars (USD) per barrel in July 2008, the Russian GDP increased by an average of about 6.7 percent annually between 2001 and 2007; however, that was mainly achieved by the export of oil and gas, representing 20 percent of Russia’s economic performance.<sup>450</sup>

The economic recovery and decline in Russia’s debt enabled a more assertive foreign policy and opened up opportunities for enhanced military reform that had been underway since 2008. In operationalizing the national interests, the military reform is supposed to ensure the provision of adequate tools for hard-power foreign policy, and as such, the reform is a “direct reflection of what the government has made Russia’s national interests. The reforms call for the military to modernize, specialize and professionalize. The military will need to be able to respond quickly to small-scale or

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<sup>447</sup>Alfred B. Evans Jr., “Civil Society and Protest,” in *Return to Putin’s Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren, 5th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 119.

<sup>448</sup>Pew Research Center, “Despite Concerns about Governance, Ukrainians Want to Remain One Country,” May 18, 2014, 18, <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/05/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Ukraine-Russia-Report-FINAL-May-8-2014.pdf>.

<sup>449</sup>Pekka Suetela, “Economic Policy,” in *Return to Putin’s Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren, 5th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 173–74.

<sup>450</sup>Wipperfuerth, *Russlands Aussenpolitik*, 20+95.

specific threats.”<sup>451</sup> Because the military has been equipped with a vast amount of new armaments and has enjoyed multiple defense budget increases, state media is using the Russian military to portray Putin as a strong man, claiming publicly that no other country has superiority over Russia.<sup>452</sup> For the domestic message, it is important for Putin to be portrayed and perceived as the strong man in Russia in order to not be contested, but especially in order to unite the population behind the Kremlin’s foreign policy, which uses the paradigm of nationalism and xenophobia to get the masses mobilized for a common Russian cause, as determined by the Kremlin.<sup>453</sup>

After oil prices became stable at more than 100 USD after January 2011, which only enhanced Russia’s position, the price fell rapidly to less than 60 USD at the end of 2014, threatening Russia’s economic development and its internal stability in the face of rising prices and inflation. Contemporary foreign policy has to consider the domestic sphere while a population worries more and more about its future, with 80 percent of Russians believing that the standard of living will decline and the economy deteriorate.<sup>454</sup> However, when asked to name the primary reasons for the economic situation in Russia and the increases in prices, 45 percent attribute the problems to the rise in the price of oil; another 33 percent hold the sanctions of the West responsible; and only 23 percent name Russian foreign policy regarding Crimea and Ukraine. However, despite increasing challenges to Russia and especially to its economy in the wake of the Crimea annexation, 83 percent of Russians think favorably of President Putin and trust in his foreign policy decisions.<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>451</sup>David Capezza, “Translating Russia’s Military Reform,” *Small Wars Journal*, April 17, 2009, 12, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/translating-russias-military-reform>.

<sup>452</sup>Douglas Ernst, “Putin: No Nation Has Military Superiority over Russia,” *Washington Times*, February 20, 2015, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/feb/20/putin-no-nation-has-military-superiority-russia/>.

<sup>453</sup>Tsyppkin, “Russian Politics,” 783.

<sup>454</sup>Levada Center, “Opinion Poll 14–17 November 2014,” *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 160 (December 22, 2014): 12, [http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/Russian\\_Analytical\\_Digest\\_onehundredandsixty.pdf](http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/Russian_Analytical_Digest_onehundredandsixty.pdf).

<sup>455</sup>Pew Research Center, “Despite Concerns about Governance,” 19.

## B. EVOLUTION OF EVENTS IN THE UKRAINE CRISIS OF 2014

When Leonid Kravchuk declared Ukraine's independence in 1991, nationalists in Russia were already questioning the legal grounds of Khrushchev's 1954 transfer of Crimea to Ukraine—a question that in 1992 led to an unsuccessful initiative in the Duma to declare the transfer illegal. Currently, however, a new initiative to denounce the legality of Khrushchev's decision is being prepared in the Federal Council, in which Putin enjoys comfortable support.<sup>456</sup> Interestingly, in 2011, Wipperfuertth reported on rumors that, after the NATO Bucharest summit in April 2008, Putin had announced his demand for the transfer of Crimea to Russia, if Ukraine joined NATO.<sup>457</sup> Three years after the publication of the book, Crimea was annexed by Russia; however, it was in the wake of the events of Ukraine's government toppling after the decision not to sign an EU association agreement that sparked public protest, not an issue related to NATO, as Yanukovych had already taken NATO membership off the table.

In the fall of 2013, just short of the EU summit in Lithuania, the Ukrainian economy was in distress. The economy had been in recession since 2012 with a declining GDP, leading to an average 0 percent GDP change in 2013, a federal budget that could not be met, while external debt rose from 76.6 percent in 2012 to 81 percent in 2013, due to weak demand and limited access to European capital markets, as well as a risk of failure to implement domestic macroeconomic reforms.<sup>458</sup> Shortly after Yanukovych's Party of the Regions abstained in the *Verkhovna Rada* (Ukrainian parliament) from a law that would have allowed imprisoned former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko to receive medical treatment in Germany, a government decree was issued halting negotiations with the EU on an association agreement, which was supplemented by an agreement for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov is said to have justified the decision in order to “ensure the national security of

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<sup>456</sup>Jilge, “Geschichtspolitik statt Voelkerrecht,” 2.

<sup>457</sup>Wipperfuertth, *Russlands Aussenpolitik*, 100.

<sup>458</sup>World Bank, “Ukraine Economic Update,” April 4, 2014, <http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/eca/ukraine/ua-macro-april-2014-en.pdf>.

Ukraine . . . and to restore . . . lost trade volumes with the Russian Federation.”<sup>459</sup> This statement comes in light of Russian import restrictions for Ukrainian goods that were temporarily imposed in summer 2013 and the announcement by the Russian oil and gas corporation Gazprom to deliver only resources that had been paid fully in advance.<sup>460</sup>

The news of Yanukovych’s decision to halt the EU association agreement ignited spontaneous protests of pro-Euro and pro-West factions within the Ukrainian population in the center of Kiev on November 21, 2013. When Ukraine did not sign the long-announced and planned association agreement at the EU Eastern Partnership Summit from November 28–29, 2013, the protests on the Kievan Independence Square had grown to several tens of thousands of peaceful demonstrators calling for the Yanukovych administration to step down and proceed with the closure of the EU association agreement. In Europe, the decision was received with disappointment, anger, and confusion, but encouraged democratic opposition to the decision, as the European Council stated in the joint declaration after the event that “the participants of the Vilnius Summit take note of the decision by the Ukrainian Government to suspend temporarily the process of preparations for signature of the Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between the EU and Ukraine. They also take note of the unprecedented public support for Ukraine’s political association and economic integration with the EU.”<sup>461</sup> As the number of protesters grew into the hundreds of thousands by December, it became obvious that neither the Kremlin, nor the Ukrainian government, nor the German chancellery had expected such a fierce, large, and enduring protest, which occupied the Maidan in Kiev and was the nickname “Euromaidan.”<sup>462</sup> During that time, Russia engaged heavily in Ukraine in support of the Yanukovych regime, offering additional loans without any preconditions, as opposed to the EU that made the release of Tymoshenko a precondition for the EU-Ukraine agreement, or

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<sup>459</sup>Andrew Rettman, “Ukraine Pulls the Plug on EU Treaty,” *EU Observer*, November 21, 2013, <https://euobserver.com/foreign/122190>.

<sup>460</sup>Rinke, “How Putin Lost Berlin,” 2.

<sup>461</sup>Council of the European Union, “Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, 28–29 November 2013: Eastern Partnership; The Way Ahead.” *Council of the European Union*, November 29, 2013, 3, [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/139765.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/139765.pdf).

<sup>462</sup>Rinke, “How Putin Lost Berlin,” 3.

renegotiations on gas prices for Ukraine. Responding to Russia's enhanced engagement amid the Euromaidan protests, Chancellor Merkel and Radek Sikorski, the Polish Foreign Minister, criticized Russian interference and rejected the idea of a bidding war about Ukraine's future direction (East or West), adding that the EU would be "more attractive in civilisational and economic terms."<sup>463</sup> Merkel added that the EU respects these decisions and will continue to offer the closing of the EU association agreement, rather than interpreting Ukraine's decision as a decision for postponement.<sup>464</sup> The West's hopes gained traction as, despite calculations by the Ukrainian government and the Kremlin, the protests centered around the Maidan in Kiev did not lose momentum, but strengthened and repeatedly turned into violent clashes with riot police. With continuing back-and-forth diplomacy between Brussels, Kiev, and Moscow, negotiations on the EU association agreement continued, in which the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, and Poland—the Weimarer Triangle—took the lead in mediating an acceptable solution.<sup>465</sup>

While the occupation of the Maidan continued, the beginning of the Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, on February 9 were paralleled by a calmer situation in Kiev until February 18, when violence again erupted and led to bloody clashes, culminating in the morning of February 20 when snipers engaged protesters and eighty-eight people were killed within forty-eight hours.<sup>466</sup> The outburst of violence started when Yanukovych tried to push a set of laws through the Ukrainian parliament, which would criminalize public demonstrations—laws similar to those that Putin introduced over the course of several years. The bloodshed led to mass defections amongst Yanukovych's allies in the *Verkhovna Rada*, where the Party of the Regions actually enjoyed a majority, and consequently pressured Yanukovych to engage in negotiations with the Ukrainian opposition mediated in the presence of the foreign ministers of the Weimarer Triangle

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<sup>463</sup>Valentina Pop and Andrew Rettman, "Merkel Criticises Russia on Eve of Vilnius Summit," *EU Observer*, November 27, 2013, <https://euobserver.com/foreign/122264>.

<sup>464</sup>Ibid.

<sup>465</sup>Rinke, "How Putin Lost Berlin," 4.

<sup>466</sup>BBC, "Ukraine Crisis in Maps," *BBC News*, April 18, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27308526>.

and Vladimir Lukin, the envoy of the Russian President, during the night of February 20.<sup>467</sup> The negotiations resulted in an agreement on new nationwide presidential elections at the end of 2014, as well as other concessions by the Ukrainian government and the end of active violence in Kiev. During the signature procedure of the truce on February 21, the majority of security and police forces began to withdraw from inner Kiev after parliament had adopted a resolution in the wake of the bloody Euromaidan Thursday, calling for all forces of the Interior Ministry to return to their barracks. Although this order was not given by the president, the forces withdrew, which caught Yanukovich completely by surprise.<sup>468</sup> Although Yanukovich's February 21 getaway to the Eastern Ukraine city of Kharkiv had not been a panicked reaction to the recognition that all his supporters, especially the Party of the Regions and the security forces, had lost any trust in him and therefore abandoned him, the Ukrainian president later sought refuge in Russia.<sup>469</sup> Multiple sources reported that Putin and his circle of trust agreed at that time to get Crimea back, allegedly stating on the night from February 22 to 23 that the Russians "have to start the work on Crimea's return into Russia."<sup>470</sup>

After the police in Kiev declared its cooperation with the Euromaidan protesters, the Ukrainian parliament on February 22 voted unanimously to remove President Yanukovich from office, to hold early presidential elections May 25, and to abolish Russia as the second official language in Ukraine. These decisions automatically overturned the truce signed on February 21, as the proposed government of unity in Ukraine was never set up and constitutional reform, foreseen for March to September 2014 in Ukraine, would not have been possible in light of early elections.<sup>471</sup> This effect was exploited by Russia, as it perceived the ousting of President Yanukovich as a *coup*

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<sup>467</sup>Andrew Higgins and Andrew E. Kramer, "Ukraine Leader Was Defeated Even before He Was Ousted," *New York Times*, January 3, 2015, <http://nyti.ms/1Bu5EM0>.

<sup>468</sup>Higgins and Kramer, "Ukraine Leader Was Defeated."

<sup>469</sup>Ibid.

<sup>470</sup>Rinke, "How Putin Lost Berlin," 4; David Stamp, ed., "Putin Says Plan to Take Crimea Hatched before Referendum," *Reuters*, March 9, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/09/us-ukraine-crisis-putin-crimea-idUSKBN0M51DG20150309>.

<sup>471</sup>Sabine Fischer, "Escalation in Ukraine," *SWP*, March 2014, 1, [http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publications/swp-comments-en/swp-aktuelle-details/article/eskalation\\_der\\_ukraine\\_krise.html](http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publications/swp-comments-en/swp-aktuelle-details/article/eskalation_der_ukraine_krise.html).



*d'état* staged by the West within Russia's declared sphere of privileged interests and causing the final rift between Russia and the West.<sup>472</sup> While the *Verkhovna Rada* voted to appoint former parliamentary Speaker Olexander Turchynov as Ukraine's interim president, Moscow denied the new government any recognition, arguing that Victor Yanukovych would be the only legitimate president of Russia and calling to fulfill the deal brokered on February 21.<sup>473</sup> Russian fear for the safety of ethnic Russians in Ukraine was additionally fueled by the parliament's hasty decision to abolish Russian as a second official language, a law introduced by Yanukovych only in 2012 to strengthen the Russian minority in Ukraine, which resembled only 17 percent of the population.<sup>474</sup> In the aftermath of the transition from the Yanukovych regime to the new interim government, resistance movements were formed in Eastern Ukraine, largely dominated by ethnic Russians and supported by Yanukovych when the removed president appeared in a TV statement on February 28, sent from the Russian city Rostov-on-Don, where he stated, "I want to remind everyone that I remain not only the single legitimate president of Ukraine, but also the supreme commander in chief."<sup>475</sup>

Despite Putin and Merkel agreeing to do anything to maintain the territorial integrity of Ukraine in a telephone call on February 23, opposition to the new government and the Euromaidan movement in Kiev emerged in the eastern and southeastern parts of Ukraine, allegedly claiming to defend Ukraine from the ultranationalist and neonacists that had overthrown the legitimate government in Kiev. The large Russian military exercises (with reportedly more than 35,000 troops) held in late February close to the Ukrainian-Russian border virtually covered the back of the emerging opposition movement in eastern and southeastern Ukraine and gave a clear message to the Ukrainians, whether it was intended or not.<sup>476</sup> In Crimea especially

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<sup>472</sup>Igor Zevelev, "The Russian World Boundaries," *Russia in Global Affairs*, June 7, 2014, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/The-Russian-World-Boundaries-16707>.

<sup>473</sup>Daniel Harari and Ben Smith, "Ukraine, Crimea and Russia," House of Commons Research Paper 14/16, March 17, 2014, 3–4, <http://ssd.al.uw.edu.pl/pliki/aktualnosci/rp14-16.pdf>.

<sup>474</sup>Fischer, "Escalation in Ukraine," 2.

<sup>475</sup>Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, "Defiant Yanukovych Says He'll Return to Kyiv," March 11, 2014, <http://www.rferl.org/content/yanukovych-ukraine-appearance-russia-rostov-crimea/25292472.html>.

<sup>476</sup>Harari and Smith, "Ukraine, Crimea and Russia," 3.



opposition became fierce when protesters took over the Crimean parliament in Sevastopol by force on February 27 and raised the Russian flag.<sup>477</sup> The members of the Crimean regional parliament voted in a closed parliamentary session—in the presence of intimidating pro-Russian gunmen—on a referendum of independence to be held on May 25 and appointed Sergey Aksyonov as the new Crimean prime minister.<sup>478</sup> On February 28, unidentified armed soldiers, perceived to be Russian forces without any identifying insignias, blocked the Crimean airports of Simferopol and Sevastopol, and together with Crimean self-defense forces, seized the main administration buildings on the peninsula.<sup>479</sup> The rapidly evolving events in Crimea were paralleled on February 28 by proposals in the Duma to adopt a bill that would facilitate the accession of foreign territories to the Russian Federation after a popular referendum was taken.<sup>480</sup> All over Crimea, armed groups of “Little Green Men”—a reference by journalists to the color of the uniforms and unconfirmed origin of the soldiers—and pro-Russian self-defense militias took positions around Ukrainian military installations and critical infrastructure, taking charge of the whole of Crimea. The Russian newspaper *Novaya Gazeta* called the involvement of Russian troops—most probably belonging to the 13,000–15,000 soldiers of Russia’s Black Sea fleet legally stationed in Crimea—a “tragicomic masquerade . . . [as] the little green men will turn into Russian troops very soon.”<sup>481</sup> Despite sufficient photographic evidence, Russian personal combat equipment, Russian registered military vehicles, and the highly organized and professional appearance of the Little Green Men, Putin “promise[d] again that there [were] no regular Russian soldiers active in Crimea” when he spoke to Chancellor Merkel on February 28 on the telephone.<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>477</sup>Rinke, “How Putin Lost Berlin,” 5.

<sup>478</sup>Ibid.

<sup>479</sup>European Parliament, “Crimea Problem Arises,” *Ukraine: Timeline of Events*, September 18, 2014, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20140203STO34645/html/Ukraine-timeline-of-events>; Harari and Smith, “Ukraine, Crimea and Russia,” 3; Rinke, “How Putin Lost Berlin,” 5.

<sup>480</sup>Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, “Russian Lawmakers Want to Simplify Process of Adding New Regions,” February 28, 2014, <http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-considers-adding-regions/25280068.html>.

<sup>481</sup>Vitali Sevchenko, “‘Little Green Men’ or ‘Russian Invaders’?” *BBC News*, March 11, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26532154>.

<sup>482</sup>Rinke, “How Putin Lost Berlin,” 5.

With the progressing military situation in Crimea and increasing doubts about the explanation of the unidentified armed gunmen to be self-defence militias, on March 1 the Duma authorized the Russian president to deploy Russian forces inside Ukraine.<sup>483</sup> As it became increasingly obvious that Russia was interfering in Crimea on a large scale, NATO, as well as the G7 leaders and the EU, called upon Russia to adhere to the basic principles of the UN Charter and the 1997 Black Sea basing agreement. In a telephone conference between the German Chancellor and the Russian President, Putin admitted that the forces in Crimea were directly linked to Russian troops, whereas Merkel censured Russia, saying that the “unacceptable Russian intervention in Crimea violated international law, especially the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, in which Russia pledged to respect Ukraine’s independence and sovereignty in its existing borders.”<sup>484</sup> Additionally, the idea of an OSCE observer mission was brought forward. After the telephone conversation with Putin, it became clear that the chancellor and German Foreign Minister Steinmeier both felt “deceived and lied to by the Russian president,”<sup>485</sup> convincing them to prepare a tougher approach towards the Kremlin.

On March 6, the EU discussed a sanction regime towards Russia in the context of its involvement in Ukraine. The new Crimean government decided to bring forward the referendum on Crimea’s status from May 25 to March 16, which parallel the Ukrainian presidential elections.<sup>486</sup> The failure of German-led mediation between Russia and the West on March 5 at the foreign ministerial level, and the new timing for the illegitimate referendum, sped up the EU process to agree on sanctions. Initially, due to the reluctance of Germany, Italy, and France, EU leaders only wanted to talk about suspension of

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<sup>483</sup>Harari and Smith, “Ukraine, Crimea and Russia,” 4.

<sup>484</sup>Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung [Press and Information Agency of the Federal Government], “Bundeskanzlerin Merkel telefoniert mit dem russischen Präsidenten Putin” [Chancellor Merkel in a telephone conversation with Russia’s President Putin], March 3, 2014, <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Pressemitteilungen/BPA/2014/03/2014-03-02-telefonat-putin.html>.

<sup>485</sup>Rinke, “How Putin Lost Berlin,” 6.

<sup>486</sup>Forschungsstelle Osteuropa an der Universität Bremen und Deutsche Gesellschaft für Osteuropakunde [Research Center Eastern Europe at the University of Bremen and German Society for East European Studies], “Chronicle 28 February–13 March 2014,” *Russland-Analysen* [Russian analyses] 273, March 14, 2014, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland/pdf/RusslandAnalysen273.pdf>.

diplomatic contacts, but due to the rescheduling of the Crimean referendum, the EU nations agreed to a three-tier sanction system, with economic sanctions in the last tier; however, even EU officials were surprised by Germany's tougher stance in that, as Merkel believed, "one must show Russia that its behavior has consequences."<sup>487</sup>

On March 11, after the Crimean parliament had voted for its independence in preparation of the referendum and to bypass Ukrainian constitutional law, the West *unisono* condemned the referendum as illegal and called upon Russia to restrain its intervention. On March 12, during the European Parliament discussion about the situation in Crimea and Ukraine, a Green Party member of the European Parliament, Rebecca Harms, stated that the EU had a strong tool at hand and pointed out that "45% of Russia's trade is with the European Union," adding that the EU would not engage "in some kind of military conflict. Make it clear to Russia, if they want to isolate themselves, then that is what is going to happen."<sup>488</sup> While the U.S. and the EU prepared sanctions, including "travel bans and visa restrictions as well as asset freezes on Russian officials who the EU decides were associated with the incursion into Crimea,"<sup>489</sup> the violence in Eastern Ukraine increased, especially in the industrial cities of Donetsk and Luhansk, which are dominated by ethnic Russians. In Germany on March 13, the chancellor gave a policy statement to the deputies of the *Bundestag*, where she stressed several important key points concerning the situation in Crimea. Commenting on comparisons of the situation in Kosovo 1999 and the 2014 Crimea situation, Merkel rejected the "shameful comparison . . . [as] Russia's actions in Ukraine undoubtedly represent a violation of fundamental principles of international law. They would not be relativised by other international law violations."<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>487</sup>Rinke, "How Putin Lost Berlin," 7.

<sup>488</sup>European Parliament, "Ukraine: MEPs Call for Firm Action on Russia to Prevent further Escalation," March 12, 2014, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20140312STO38705/html/Ukraine-MEPs-call-for-firm-action-on-Russia-to-prevent-further-escalation>.

<sup>489</sup>Harari and Smith, "Ukraine, Crimea and Russia," 5.

<sup>490</sup>Angela Merkel, "Policy Statement by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel on the Situation in Ukraine," Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, March 13, 2014, [http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Reden/2014/2014-03-13-regierungserklaerung-ukraine\\_en.html?nn=709674](http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Reden/2014/2014-03-13-regierungserklaerung-ukraine_en.html?nn=709674).

A United Nations resolution draft to encourage nations to disregard the results of the planned Crimean referendum was vetoed by Russia in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on March 15. In the referendum held on March 16, the Crimean population was asked whether they sought an accession to Russia, which the Crimean parliament had already endorsed on March 11, or to return to Crimea's 1992 constitution of autonomy within Ukraine.<sup>491</sup> Under the intimidating influence of more than fifteen thousand Russian soldiers, armed pro-Russian self-defense forces, and armed Cossacks that have surrounded all Ukrainian military troops in Crimea, 96 percent of the people voted for accession to the Russian Federation, although the results were later called into doubt.<sup>492</sup>

After having recognized Crimean independence on March 17, Putin delivered a sweeping blow to the West in his speech on March 18 and elaborated on all accusations made toward Russia in connection with the Crimean situation, especially on the accusations of violations of international law, stating, with reference to Western interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, that “they [the West] say we are violating norms of international law. Firstly, it’s a good thing that they at least remember that there exists such a thing as international law—better late than never,” while continuing to deny any breach of international law.<sup>493</sup> With an appeal to Germans, Putin reminded the audience of Germany’s strong will to reunite, which the Russians have poignantly supported, thus expecting that “the citizens of Germany will also support the aspiration of the Russians, of historical Russia, to restore unity.”<sup>494</sup> Based on the Russian president’s request, on March 18, 2014, the Federal Assembly adopted a constitutional law to grant accession to Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as new entities of the Russian Federation. With that, Russia mastered the formal annexation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol in an *Anschluss*-like operation.

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<sup>491</sup>Harari and Smith, “Ukraine, Crimea and Russia,” 6–7.

<sup>492</sup>Jilge, “Geschichtspolitik statt Voelkerrecht,” 2+5.

<sup>493</sup>Putin, “Address by President of Russian Federation.”

<sup>494</sup>Ibid.

After the referendum and the annexation by Russia, the EU and the United States executed the first round of sanctions on Russians officials and high-level Ukrainians who took part in the land grab. In the first week of April 2014, armed pro-Russian protesters seized government buildings in the Eastern parts of Ukraine, igniting new fears for separatist threats to Ukraine's stability after the loss of Crimea. In a 2015 TV documentary, Putin made clear how determined the Russian president was regarding the operation to take over Crimea. When Putin responded to the question of "putting Russia's nuclear weapons into a state of combat readiness . . . Putin said: We were ready to do this. [Crimea] is our historical territory. Russian people live there. They were in danger. We cannot abandon them."<sup>495</sup> However, with the U.S. and Germany feeling deliberately deceived by Putin, which was only reinforced after Putin openly admitted that the "Little Green Men" had been under Russian command, the general consensus in the West was, that unlike 2008 when the West and Russia returned to business as usual after a short time, this time "Russia must pay a high prize for its seizure of Crimea."<sup>496</sup>

### **C. INTERNATIONAL AND GERMAN REACTIONS TO THE RUSSIAN ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA**

After the change of government in Kiev and the ousting of former President Yanukovych, the West hoped to have calmed the situation in a highly divided Ukraine. However, after pro-Russian protests turned violent in eastern and southeastern Ukraine, and especially with the pace of events advancing in Crimea, supported by the massive intervention of the "Little Green Men," an initial international paralysis could be observed, even if only briefly. In recognition of Russia's dominant role in the sphere of influence, efforts for consultations and mediation were widely used in an approach to find a solution with Ukraine and Russian leadership that continued to deny having an active role in the events in Ukraine.

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<sup>495</sup>BBC, "Ukraine conflict: Putin 'was ready for nuclear alert,'" BBC News Europe, 15 March 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31899680>; Editorial Board, "President Vladimir Putin's Dangerous Moves," *The New York Times*, 16 April 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/16/opinion/president-vladimir-putins-dangerous-moves.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/16/opinion/president-vladimir-putins-dangerous-moves.html?_r=0).

<sup>496</sup>Rinke, "How Putin lost Berlin," 8.

The international pressure and expectations towards Russia gradually increased the closer the announced Crimean referendum came. However, multiple sessions of the UNSC in New York and constant back-and-forth diplomacy in Europe—led by Germany and France and supplemented by the United States—did not achieve satisfactory results with Moscow. Thus, after the annexation of Crimea, the EU and U.S. sanctions of the first level were imposed on Russia, which included twenty-one Russian and Ukrainian officials who were involved in the violation of Ukraine’s territorial integrity, while the United States acted against high-level Russian politicians in terms of visa restrictions and freezing financial assets.<sup>497</sup> In the direct wake of the Crimean annexation, the United States and Canada imposed additional sanctions aimed at Russia’s economic leaders, while Canada halted any military cooperation with Russia.<sup>498</sup> The G7 leaders announced on March 24 that Russian membership (G8 format) would be suspended, and the upcoming G8 summit in Sochi, Russia, was called off, while the United States added more individuals and companies to the sanction list.<sup>499</sup>

In Germany, Joe Kaeser, the chief executive officer of Siemens (a major technology and engineering group), met with President Putin on March 26 as a sign of support and referred to the crisis in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea, as “short-term turbulences,” to which Kaeser would not pay much attention, hoping that the economic relations between Russia and Germany would not be further strained.<sup>500</sup> Kaeser stated two weeks later that he regretted the word choice. However, the discussion about imposing stronger sanctions if Russia would interfere with the May 25 presidential elections in Ukraine were severely influenced by the *Ostausschuss*, who urged the chancellery not to follow tougher U.S. sanctions, which included not only persons, but

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<sup>497</sup>Forschungsstelle Osteuropa an der Universität Bremen und Deutsche Gesellschaft für Osteuropakunde [Research Center Eastern Europe at the University of Bremen and German Society for East European Studies], “Chronicle 13 March–27 March 2014,” *Russland-Analysen* [Russian analyses] 274, March 28, 2014, 31–32, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland/pdf/RusslandAnalysen274.pdf>.

<sup>498</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>499</sup>Peter Rutland, “The Impact of Sanctions on Russia,” *Russian Analytical Digest* 157 (December 17, 2014): 3, <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-157.pdf>.

<sup>500</sup>Megan Davies, “Siemens Chief Says Supports Ties with Russian Companies,” *Reuters*, March 26, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/26/us-ukraine-germany-siemens-idUSBREA2P2DB20140326>.

also Russian energy and arms companies.<sup>501</sup> Although the German public attitude towards Russia had declined in early 2014, it was still divided over the question of how to address Russia, as only 38 percent of Germans favored economic sanctions, 19 percent favored the suspension of Russia's G8 membership, but only 40 percent foresaw a stronger role for Germany.<sup>502</sup>

When a Russian-made surface-to-air missile system (known as SA-11) shot down a Malaysian Airlines Boeing 777 bound for Kuala Lumpur over the eastern Ukrainian separatist area, all 298 passengers and crew aboard were killed. That event changed European attitudes. Among the dead were one hundred and ninety-six Dutch passengers, given that flight MH17 originated in Amsterdam. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that popular attitude, especially in the Netherlands and Germany, changed dramatically, and calls for tougher sanctions against Russia were voiced. Although only 40 percent favored a stronger role for Germany after the annexation of Crimea in March, this figure jumped up 19 percent by the end of July to 59 percent, while 80 percent of the Germans blamed Russia for the increased violence.<sup>503</sup> The exact crash site was within the combat zone between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists, and the recovery operations were severely hampered. Russia denied any involvement in the incident and explained that Ukrainian fighter jets shot down the airliner. Russia's obstructing behavior in trying to bring the responsible persons for the slaughter of the passengers to justice and its denial tactics—seen not only in the MH17 incident, but throughout the Ukrainian crisis—led to additional rounds of sanctions on July 25 and 30 with nations like Australia, Japan, Norway, and Switzerland joining the sanctions against Russia.<sup>504</sup>

Despite the increasingly tougher sanctions regime against Russia, Germany always endeavored to make “it clear that the door to partnership with Russia remains

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<sup>501</sup>Rutland, “The Impact of Sanctions on Russia,” 3.

<sup>502</sup>Infratest Dimap, “ARD DeutschlandTREND” [ARD German Trend], March 2014, <http://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2014/maerz/>.

<sup>503</sup>Infratest Dimap, “ARD DeutschlandTREND” [ARD German Trend], August 2014, <http://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2014/august/>.

<sup>504</sup>Rutland, “The Impact of Sanctions on Russia,” 3–4.

wide open.”<sup>505</sup> Merkel and Steinmeier agreed on a triad of principles in Germany’s approach towards Russia in light of the Ukraine crisis: keep an open communication channel with Russia, enhance sanctions, if required, and maintain assistance for Ukraine.<sup>506</sup> Over the course of 2014, with intensive fighting in eastern Ukraine, several sanctions were added to the list, which were supposed to remain in place for at least a year before they would be put on the table for reevaluation.<sup>507</sup>

So far, sanctions have been considered tough; and along with the political blame and continuous demands at the Kremlin’s address to exert its influence towards lasting peace in Ukraine, they show an impact on Russia. In Germany, the sanctions are paralleled by the cancellation of Russian-German governmental consultations and the silent support, of opposition from the *Ostausschuss* after the tragedy of MH17, especially in that economic bilateral trade relations will be affected. According to the Federal Foreign Office, “in 2015, bilateral trade declined by 35 per cent compared with the previous year, to EUR 7.74 billion. In January and February 2015, German exports to Russia fell by 34 per cent, to EUR 3.07 billion, and Russian exports to Germany declined by 36 per cent, to EUR 4.66 billion.”<sup>508</sup> This is a sign not only of the effects of the sanctions, but also of the general trend in German-Russian trade relations that the *Ostausschuss* tried to withstand. At the end of 2014, more than a third of German business engaged in operations in Russia planned to cancel projected investments; and on the societal side, numerous consultation projects and cooperation forums have been put on hold because “trust in Moscow has evaporated.”<sup>509</sup> A consequence of the serious disruption in German-Russian relations is characterized by the significant emigration of Westerners out of Russia. For example, the number of Germans, who are among the most

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<sup>505</sup>Federal Foreign Office, “Russian Federation.”

<sup>506</sup>Rinke, “How Putin Lost Berlin,” 8.

<sup>507</sup>Rutland, “The Impact of Sanctions on Russia,” 4.

<sup>508</sup>Federal Foreign Office, “Russian Federation.”

<sup>509</sup>Jack Ewing and Alison Smale, “In Reversal, Germany Cools to Russian Investment,” *New York Times*, December 28, 2014, <http://nyti.ms/1rsDUXI>.



important foreign investors, living in Russia declined by 31 percent between January 2014 and January 2015.<sup>510</sup>

However, Russian Prime Minister Medvedev stated in April 2015, after one year of an increasingly tightening sanctions regime in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea, that the sanctions have "done 'meaningful' harm to the economy, but that it was a price worth paying,"<sup>511</sup> estimating the loss for Russia's economy at 26.8 billion USD. Medvedev's statement came one week after President Putin talked about the Russian economy in a TV appearance, where he concentrated on the state of the domestic economy after the ruble had lost 50 percent in 2014 (although it has since rebounded by 30 percent).<sup>512</sup> Nevertheless, Putin's long elaborations on the state of the domestic Russian economy are seen as a sign of the vital importance of the topic to the Kremlin. In light of these figures, Moscow has to realize that "the desire for cooperation with Russia has dropped during the Putin years and the demand for Germany to stand up to Russia has increased."<sup>513</sup> On the other side, Putin is well aware of the fact that whatever sanctions are to come in the future, they "will only go as far as Berlin permits."<sup>514</sup> In this regard, it should be noted, that the sanctions from November 2014 are directed against key players of the separatist movements in Ukraine, not directly at Russia.

German scholar Ulrich Kuehn has criticized the current sanctions, saying that they lack a clear objective and asking whether the goal is the withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine, including Crimea, or regime change in Moscow?<sup>515</sup> Kuehn, arguing to understand the Russian perspective, assessed that either is unlikely to be achieved with the current course of action. This opens up the question on what alternative options the leaders of the West had at hand during the fast development leading to Crimea's

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<sup>510</sup>Kathrin Hille, "Foreign Exodus from Russia Gathers Pace," *Financial Times*, February 4, 2015, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/8c0ae414-ac92-11e4-9d32-00144feab7de.html#axzz3b5k90M8A>.

<sup>511</sup>Andrew Roth, "Russian Premier Says Annexation of Crimea Was Worth Sanctions Fallout," *New York Times*, April 21, 2015, <http://nyti.ms/1Dcy1y6>.

<sup>512</sup>Ibid.

<sup>513</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 18.

<sup>514</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>515</sup>Ulrich Kuehn, "Understanding Russia," *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 162 (February 2015): 8, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?lng=en&id=188068>.

annexation. A military option was never on the table in the United States or Europe, and least of all in Germany, where the chancellor ruled out any military engagement early on during the crisis, but for a small part to an OSCE mission, which in the end was not executed. Through Moscow's military involvement in Crimea, Putin challenged the universal validity of the Westphalian system of states and violated not only the UN Charter, but also the Budapest memorandum of 1994, as well as the 1975 Final Act of the CSCE. Consequently, as Putin's forceful change of borders required an answer by the democracies of the West, only various possibilities of sanctioning Moscow were available.

While economic sanctions usually target a country and its economy as a whole, the initial sanctions on Russia were interpreted as "smart" sanctions in that they targeted selected individuals that bore responsibility for the Ukraine crisis and the annexation of Crimea, instead of the whole of Russia.<sup>516</sup> These sanctions work in several ways: they signal to Russia that the West perceives Russia's course of action as violating international law, which is the foundation of twenty-first century statecraft (at least, that is what Western politicians believed to be the *modus operandi* since the end of the Cold War); they penalize the perpetrators of international relations, as well as anyone striving to repeat such a *coup de main*; and they aim at the diplomatic players to coerce the Russian leadership to change its course and respect Ukrainian territorial integrity, renounce the annexation of Crimea, and play by the universally validated rules of international relations.<sup>517</sup>

Some critics of sanctioning Russia argue that the sanctions are "a demonstrative act that allows leaders to make a moral statement, without actually influencing developments on the ground."<sup>518</sup> However, such criticism disregards the indirect effects of sanctions and especially the reasons behind imposing sanctions. Although the effects of the imposed sanctions on the Russian economy were considerable, the indirect effects,

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<sup>516</sup>Rutland, "The Impact of Sanctions on Russia," 2.

<sup>517</sup>Francesco Giumelli, "Sanctioning Russia: The Right Questions," *Issue Alert*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, February 10, 2015, 2, [http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Alert\\_10\\_sanctions.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Alert_10_sanctions.pdf).

<sup>518</sup>Rutland, "The Impact of Sanctions on Russia," 2.

causing an atmosphere within the Russian economy of uncertainty and mistrust, were more painful.<sup>519</sup> This has severe impacts on the economic stability and flow of foreign investments. As German foreign policy has been caught between interest-led *Realpolitik* with Russia in terms of economic interdependency and valued-based *Moralpolitik*, the evolution of sanctions against Russia were well considered by those in power. Even before the MH17 disaster, Merkel and Steinmeier had used the same language in their public appearances, deliberately showing unity in the crisis, although criticism was heard (especially within the SPD) regarding the penalizing approach to Russia. Critics of the grand coalition's approach were found in the party *Die Linke* and in the "Russian-Firsters" sections of the SPD, such as the former state premier of Brandenburg, Matthias Platzeck (SPD)—now chairman of the German-Russian Forum—who called for Germany to endorse the annexation as a means of appeasing the relations with the Kremlin.<sup>520</sup> Platzeck's comments drew significant outrage in Germany, even within the SPD, because his close SPD friend and current Foreign Minister Steinmeier responded by stating that he repeatedly made clear that the annexation "is a clear violation of law which we cannot endorse nor recognize," adding that Germans have to "stand by our common European position which is that we don't accept what has happened and we don't accept Europe's borders being changed again 70 years after the war."<sup>521</sup> The international and German reactions to the annexation of Crimea started with selective and targeted sanctions but grew as the course of events in Ukraine unfolded. Reactions from the international community and Germany emerged piece by piece and could only be reactive to the events as they happened. In case of the Russian annexation of Crimea, according to Chancellor Merkel and her Foreign Minister Steinmeier, "'the strength of the law' must be defended against 'the law of the strong.'"<sup>522</sup>

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<sup>519</sup>Rutland, "The impact of Sanctions on Russia," 4.

<sup>520</sup>Erik Kirschbaum, "Senior German Politician under Fire for Plea to Recognize Russian Crimea," *Reuters*, November 19, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/19/us-ukraine-crisis-germany-platzeck-idUSKCN0J31PF20141119>.

<sup>521</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>522</sup>Rinke, "How Putin Lost Berlin," 9.

#### D. DOES PUTIN'S POWER PLAY PAY OFF?

In Kissinger's realpolitical perception, "the statesman manipulates reality; his first goal is survival; he feels responsible not only for the best but also for the worst conceivable outcome."<sup>523</sup> So far, Putin's course of action has shown mixed results, but in Kissinger's perception, Putin achieved "survival"—his own as well as Russia's—as the annexation of Crimea boosted his approval rating, peaking at 88 percent in October 2014.<sup>524</sup> At the same time, however, the "worst conceivable outcome" can be seen in the current state of Russia's economy: despair. Putin, despite Russia's enormous currency reserves, has to decide which course to take to pursue his foreign policy objectives. Moscow's current strategy of power politics—*Realpolitik* at its best—is costly for the country in that it is implemented at the cost of Russia's economic development and international standing. If the Kremlin's major objective of a stable economy is to be achieved, the president has to take into account that "prosperity cannot be built in isolation . . . it comes from able management of interaction with other countries, creative exploitation of the opportunities such interaction provides."<sup>525</sup>

Thomas Graham, writing in 2009 about Russia's sources of insecurity, states in his conclusion that "the [Russian] leadership needs to bring the country together, to instill a sense that all citizens are bound by a common fate, and to mobilise the elites and the rest of the population for this ambitious undertaking. Only in this way can Russia's leaders ensure the country's survival and territorial integrity, and achieve the great power status they believe is their country's due."<sup>526</sup> Through Russian actions in Ukraine, supported by nationalist, pan-slavist rhetoric, Putin has united the population to the common fate of Russia's great power ambitions and has drawn the elites closer to him. With their assets abroad frozen (due to the sanctions), the elites will become more dependent on the Kremlin. Evidence of Putin's domestic success is shown in an opinion poll from December 2014, where 67 percent of Russians agreed that "the main

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<sup>523</sup>Kissinger, "Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy," 526.

<sup>524</sup>Levada Center, "April Ratings," May 20, 2015, <http://www.levada.ru/eng/april-ratings>.

<sup>525</sup>Graham, "Sources of Russia's Insecurity," 67.

<sup>526</sup>*Ibid.*, 71.

motivation behind the West's policy on Crimea and eastern Ukraine was hostility and a wish to seize the moment to exert pressure on Russia . . . [while] only 12 percent associated the West's actions with the idea that Russia had annexed foreign territory and violated international law."<sup>527</sup>

With military reform well underway since 2008, the Russians have significantly increased the operational expeditionary capabilities, and foremost its command and control structures, including a huge modernization program, aiming at higher flexibility and regional deployability. The massive military exercises in 2014 and the Crimean operations are sufficient proof of the enhanced abilities since 2008. In terms of the 2010 Russian Military Doctrine, Putin's actions are actually in line with the clear statement "that Russia's near abroad will remain in Russian interests, economically and politically."<sup>528</sup>

Putin's power play had two unintended consequences: first, in search of alternative partners, the sanctions would drive Russia closer to other bilateral partners, such as China or India; and second, the targeted sanctions have made the Russian government the main source for "profits for many oligarchs"<sup>529</sup> and those among the one hundred and sixty targeted individuals, uniting the elite circles around the president. The high approval rates for Putin show that the annexation of Crimea and the subsequent Russian course of action in eastern Ukraine, reported by a vast media propaganda campaign, have led to broad support for Putin's regime based upon ultra-nationalist and anti-Western attitudes.<sup>530</sup> Multiple scholars argue, therefore, that the Russian annexation of Crimea was about a Ukraine reluctant to accept Russia dominance, "to ensure Russia's influence in its neighbor, to regain the "empire's jewel," and to ensure Putin's main objective: to legitimize and safeguard his authoritarian reign."<sup>531</sup> In this regard, Putin can

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<sup>527</sup>Sabine Fischer, "European Sanctions against Russia," *SWP*, March 17, 2015, 4, [http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2015C17\\_fhs.pdf](http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2015C17_fhs.pdf).

<sup>528</sup>David Capezza, "Translating Russia's Military Reform," *Small Wars Journal*, April 17, 2009, 12, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/translating-russias-military-reform>.

<sup>529</sup>Giumelli, "Sanctioning Russia: The Right Questions," 2.

<sup>530</sup>Fischer, "European Sanctions against Russia," 5.

<sup>531</sup>Jilge, "Geschichtspolitik statt Voelkerrecht," 6.

also score domestic success, despite having destroyed the rules of engaging with the West.

Berlin has long been Russia's strongest asset in Europe when it came to mediating of diverging interests between the West and Russia, but also in terms of economic relations. Putin maintains strong connections to Germany because, besides his time in East Germany as a former intelligence officer in the KGB, he speaks fluent German (having attended a German school in Russia), and considers former Chancellor Schroeder a personal friend; he referred to returning to Dresden and Saxony, where he spent his KGB time, as "returning home."<sup>532</sup> The personal relations between Chancellor Merkel and President Putin, however, have changed significantly, as now the meeting atmosphere is being described as "cold and businesslike."<sup>533</sup> Merkel has even commented that hearing "Putin speak German, she is reminded of listening to an interrogator."<sup>534</sup> Therefore, it can be argued that Putin was aware of Germany's foreign policy identity in light of the historical context, which in the twenty-first century will still reluctantly use military force; but that does not imply that Germany will stand-by and turn a blind eye on its values. Writing for the German Council on Foreign Relations, Andreas Rinke referred to the way Putin had "lost Berlin" and pointed out that "Putin long ago crossed Berlin's red line"<sup>535</sup> by reverting to violence instead of diplomacy within the rules of the UN charter.

While most of the Western heads of state and government did not take part in the 70th commemoration of the German capitulation (the end of the European part of World War II), Merkel did go to Moscow but denied Putin her attendance at the biggest Russian military parade since 1945 and instead laid a wreath at the Russian Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. However, far from any sign of German-Russian *détente*, Merkel said during the joint press conference with President Putin on May 10, 2015, that the German-Russian cooperation of recent years had suffered a major blow over the "criminal and

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<sup>532</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 1–2.

<sup>533</sup>*Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>534</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>535</sup>Rinke, "How Putin Lost Berlin," 9–10.

illegal annexation of Crimea.”<sup>536</sup> The strong tone and the usage of the word *criminal* is rather uncommon in international diplomatic language and can be interpreted only as considerable proof of the deep split between Germany and Russia. This is even more the case as Chancellor Merkel is said to be rather quiet and pragmatic—following the motto “think, consult, decide”<sup>537</sup>—and President Putin fluently speaks German, indicating that Merkel was fully aware of what she said, while Putin definitely heard and understood her implications.

To summarize, while Putin’s power play definitely paid off in the domestic sphere—at least for the short term—the international sphere has been contaminated by foul rhetoric and, from a Western perspective, broken promises from which Putin cannot back off without losing support and domestic approval. In light of the sanctions and the implications for Russia’s economy, short-term and long-term consequences loom dark on the horizon. However, because the sanctions are “shared pain,” and because the Western or German economy is also feeling the pain of deteriorating trade relations, it might be a gamble for Putin to count on the Russian tenacity to overcome the sanctions or to wait out however long the West can endure the situation.

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<sup>536</sup>Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung [Press and Information Agency of the federal government], “Pressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel und Staatspraesident Putin am 10. Mai 2015 in Moskau, im Wortlaut” [Wording of the Press conference of Chancellor Merkel and President Putin on 10 May 2015 in Moscow], May 10, 2015, <http://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2015/05/2015-05-10-pk-merkel-putin.html>.

<sup>537</sup>Mueller-Haerlin, “Angela Merkel’s Foreign Policy,” 2.

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## V. THE END OF GERMANY'S *OSTPOLITIK* IN 2014?

Regarding Germany's determination for an active German-Russian relationship, former chancellor Helmut Schmidt made the point that "for many long centuries, they [the Russians] have been our neighbors, and because they will continue to be so, we Germans want to have normal relations and live in peace with them."<sup>538</sup> Schmidt's statement encapsulated the general reaction in 2014 by the body politic of *Russlandversteher* (Russian Firsters) in Germany, who, like Platzeck, called for an appeasement of Russia by a diplomatic recognition of the annexation of Crimea.

After 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany emerged as a nation that oriented itself and lived by the rules and norms of the UN Charter as it integrated itself into the Western European and Atlantic system, ensuring that any doubts about German revanchism would have no substance. Such fears were prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s, a time in which the FRG included a very large population of displaced Germans from Central and Eastern Europe whose political orientation may have threatened to take a kind of revanchist form, but did not. The proof of this fact came with the advent of Brandt's *Ostpolitik* in the early 1970s and unification in 1990. The significance of taking a rule-based approach for post-reunification in Germany derives from the forty years of national division and the Cold War. All the same, Germany was rebuilt in the center of a possible thermo-nuclear battlefield and yet miraculously achieved its peaceful reunification, unlike during 1864–1871. Directly after the fall of the Wall in 1989, Helmut Kohl recognized the Oder-Neisse-border once more to assure Poland and to confirm that Germany is deeply rooted in the rule of international law.<sup>539</sup> The *Westbindung* and its European and Transatlantic links, which are at the core of Germany's political foundation in terms of international relations, were the prerequisites for engaging closer with the East, which Konrad Adenauer first did in 1955 and which then-Egon Bahr and Willy Brandt did in the late 1960s with a revised *Ostpolitik* in terms

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<sup>538</sup>Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn*, 27.

<sup>539</sup>"Merkel Toughens Up," *The Economist*, November 19, 2014, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21633788-frustrated-putin-germany-and-its-chancellor-may-be-tiring-ostpolitik-merkel-toughens-up?src=scn%2Ffb%2Fw1%2Fbl%2Fmerkeltoughensup>.

of cooperation through rapprochement with the GDR and the Soviet Union. Brandt's and Bahr's *Ostpolitik* belongs to the past, of course, in that it reached its goals of reunification in 1990. One would not know it in 2015, though, as Bahr's account is invoked constantly, and often out of context, which does little good for him or for the present political situation. Now the question is about Germany's influence on Russia's domestic development as a power in Europe and a nation that aspires to partake in identical values. The architects of a new *Ostpolitik* believed in their misunderstanding that Russia was malleable and could be influenced externally; however, "the policy was never envisaged as a means to democratize or change the Soviet Union."<sup>540</sup> The post-1990 *Ostpolitik* was initially aiming at supporting Russia to manage what many hoped would be its linear and progressive transition from the communist regime of the Soviet Union to democratic structures and political institutions in Russia. Guided by German gratitude for the Soviet Union's support of overcoming the German division, Germany felt responsible for supporting this Russian that optimists hoped would cleave to the western orientation of Germany from its *Sonderweg* after 1945.<sup>541</sup>

In this regard, Germany's Russia policy changed, and consequently, its post-Cold War *Ostpolitik* as well. While most of the Eastern European states were engaged within the frameworks of NATO and the ENP, Russia retained its special status for Germany. The approach to Russia was two-fold, as "with the *Ostpolitik*, the modernization partnership is based on the concept of modernization through interdependence. It assumes that Russia cannot be changed through pressure from the outside but only through continual and nonthreatening interaction and interdependence, which will lead to change from within."<sup>542</sup> The aim was to achieve such political development as rule of law, protection of human rights, and democratic freedom through economic interdependence: cooperation through trade substituted for cooperation through rapprochement. However, the economic-driven foreign policy approach of a "modernization partnership" or

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<sup>540</sup>Meister, "Reframing Germany's Russia Policy," 4–5.

<sup>541</sup>Angela Stent, "Ostpolitik Reset," American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 7 April 2015, 2, <http://www.aicgs.org/publication/ostpolitik-reset/>.

<sup>542</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 25.

“Wandel durch Handel” (cooperation through trade) “is in tension with the civilian power emphasis on human rights, multilateralism, and ‘*Moralpolitik*.’”<sup>543</sup>

Nevertheless, the German-Russian economic relations in the 1990s and thereafter did nothing to change Russia into a democracy, nor did Putin divert from its authoritarian path, which, since 2012, has become painfully evident. So, despite the lack of success to change Russia internally, Foreign Minister Steinmeier remains committed to the legacy of Brandt’s *Ostpolitik*, which he summarizes as “a firm rooting in the West and openness vis-à-vis Russia belong together.”<sup>544</sup> While Germany’s *Ostpolitik* after 1990 was about the promotion of economic interdependence and democratic transformation, Russia’s recent policy is about the European order and is formerly based on the Westphalian peace of 1648 and the cosmos of the classical European great power system in which Russia became such a great power, along with its European rivals and at the expense of its neighbors. Within weeks of the Russian intervention in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, the European post-Cold War order, “in which [Germany and] Chancellor Merkel had invested so much effort to nurture and sustain was shattered.”<sup>545</sup> The current situation in 2015, after a quarter century of what seemed to be perpetual peace (but was not) has had grave impact on the European security order. In other words, “Europe is now much less secure, and its security structure less stable, more confrontational, and less predictable.”<sup>546</sup>

The realization that *Ostpolitik* did not permanently yield the results the Germans had hoped for in the 1990s, and even as late as 2012, came with a swiftness and brutality in Ukraine that shocked Germans. This shock exists for two main reasons, and it is no surprise that Germany has evolved as the key leader in approaching Russia in the wake of Germany’s post-2008 emergence as the power at the center. First of all, despite the

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<sup>543</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 9.

<sup>544</sup>Adomeit, “German-Russian Relations,” 13.

<sup>545</sup>Stent, “Ostpolitik Reset,” 5.

<sup>546</sup>Major and Puglierin, “Europe’s New (In)Security,” 3.

argument Berlin no longer considers Russia to be a strategic partner by Berlin,<sup>547</sup> the unique geostrategic, economic, cultural, and historical position of Germany regarding Russia remains valid in that Germany is perceived to be the “only country that can broker an end to the most serious crisis in East-West relations since before Gorbachev came to power.”<sup>548</sup> Chancellor Merkel had a significant number of telephone calls with the Russian leader (more than forty between March and November 2014), in addition to personal meetings.<sup>549</sup> Second, Germany’s has exhibited a high level of engagement and subsequent leadership, and, being true to the motto “partnership in leadership,” the United States has “delegated the diplomacy of the Ukraine crisis to Germany.”<sup>550</sup> This is evidence to the united calls by German President Gauck, Foreign Minister Steinmeier, and Defense Minister von der Leyen at the Munich Security Conference in 2014 for Germany to assume more responsibility in international and global affairs. This policy comes as Washington once again realizes that Germany is a key partner in all areas of European policy, and will be a key player in Europe on dealing with Russia. “Berlin plays a decisive role in shaping a coherent and successful Russia policy and no unified European policy on Russia is possible without Germany.”<sup>551</sup> Whether it is the Euro zone crisis or the Ukraine crisis, Germany is currently a leading power in Europe, while fear of a “German *Uebermacht*”<sup>552</sup> (German superiority as proclaimed by the *Spiegel*, a leading investigative magazine in Germany) is exaggerated. Germany’s new role in leadership is a fact in the year 2014–2015 and an uncomfortable and unfamiliar fact for many amid a world of disorder that defies easy rules or a relaxed diplomacy.

However, as stated earlier concerning the post-Cold War *Ostpolitik*, Berlin has to acknowledge that “the ‘strategic partnership’ has proven never to have existed; the

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<sup>547</sup>Constanze Stelzenmueller, “Germany, Putin’s Former Friend,” *Prospect*, February 2015, <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/opinions/germany-putins-former-friend>.

<sup>548</sup>Stent, “Ostpolitik Reset,” 1.

<sup>549</sup>Adomeit, German-Russian Relations,” 26.

<sup>550</sup>Stent, “Ostpolitik Reset,” 6.

<sup>551</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 111.

<sup>552</sup>“The German Uebermacht,” *Der Spiegel*, March 21, 2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-132696452.html>.

‘modernization partnership’ [with Moscow] did not get off the ground; [and]...the political ‘special relationship’ has come to an end.”<sup>553</sup> The consequence of the policy failure for Berlin is grave and heightens the burden for Germany’s Russian Policy; however, in March 2014, most observers still believed that “no matter what happens, Germany will keep talking.”<sup>554</sup> The annexation of Crimea, Russian-backed separatism in eastern Ukraine, and especially the MH17 airliner tragedy were a wake-up call. As NATO Deputy Secretary General put it, “We have all woken up to a new security reality here in Europe.”<sup>555</sup> This cold dawn is consequently not the end of Germany’s *Ostpolitik*, but the end of what had once been an *Ostpolitik* with German-Russian relations of *détente* and cooperation with a Russia that became a kind of fantasy in the face of how Moscow has altered the rules of international relations by force. Such a diplomatic revolution as visible in the Crimean annexation requires a new approach: a matured *Ostpolitik 2020*, unified with a European approach and preferably on common grounds with the West, thus including the United States balancing its approach between Asia and Europe and thereby re-pivoting to Europe.

#### **A. ROOT CAUSES AND THE EXTENT OF FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE**

On March 2, 2014, when Putin, finally and with thinly veiled pride, admitted that the military forces in Crimea were indeed directly under Russian control, he overstepped the red line of statecraft in Berlin. Germany’s government under Angela Merkel then reached a point of no return. With Putin’s aggression accompanied by a coordinated mass-persuasion campaign in Russia that would have done the years 1915 or 1936 proud, the regime let loose a wave of nationalistic and pan-slavist rhetoric. Putin showed his own coming-to-terms with history. By deliberately violating the 1994 Budapest Memorandums on security assurances, upon which the sovereignty of Ukraine rested, and

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<sup>553</sup>Adomeit, “German-Russian Relations,” 31.

<sup>554</sup>“Germany’s Russia Policy: Which War to Mention?” *The Economist*, March 22, 2014, <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21599410-angela-merkel-and-her-foreign-minister-crisis-throwback-worse-times-which-war>.

<sup>555</sup>Alexander Vershbow, “Prospects for NATO-Russia Relations: Keynote Address by NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alexander Vershbow at the 2015 Leangkollen Conference, Oslo,” NATO, last updated April 2, 2015, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\\_117055.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_117055.htm).

in which Moscow agreed to “respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine . . . [and] . . . to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine,”<sup>556</sup> the Kremlin clarified Putin’s understanding of the rule of international law, which, according to the Russians, the American partner opponent had violated dozens of times more brutally (in the Russian narrative) under the motto of two wrongs indeed make a right.

Moreover, Moscow did not recognize the new Ukrainian government and argued that the ousting of president Yanukovych was illegal, as was dealing with an alleged Nazi junta in Kiev to which they are not bound by any treaty.

The boldness and speed of events in 2014 caught a West (mesmerized by Islamic terrorism and world economic depression) by surprise. It has been widely argued that “Russia’s aggression against Ukraine is not an isolated incident, but a game-changer in European security”<sup>557</sup> and cannot be accepted under any circumstance. With Germany’s current *Ostpolitik* in disrepair, Berlin is caught between interest-led *Realpolitik* and value-base *Moralpolitik*. The crisis in Ukraine shows the strained limitations of this choice between interests and morality in diplomacy. The conflict pushed the limits of these ideals to their world historical edge as the *Zeitgeist* brutally shifts from peace to conflict and ultimately crisis. The imposed sanctions on Moscow by the western powers are not something that is taken lightly, and the pain of the sanctions imposed on Russia is shared by Europeans, foremost by those Germans whose cars are no longer sold to Russians and whose high quality steel is no longer forged for new towns and so forth. Although Russia had only been Germany’s eleventh largest trading partner, at least three hundred thousand jobs depend on Russian export in a nation where export of high quality goods is the highest national purpose in the face of globalization. Germany imported mainly gas and oil, 36 percent and 35 percent, respectively, from Russia in 2013.<sup>558</sup> This

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<sup>556</sup>“Budapest Memorandums on Security Assurances, 1994,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, December 5, 1994, accessed May 20, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/nonproliferation-arms-control-and-disarmament/budapest-memorandums-security-assurances-1994/p32484>.

<sup>557</sup>Vershbow, “Prospects for NATO-Russia Relations.”

<sup>558</sup>“Germany’s Russia policy.”

might explain why Berlin is not happy to impose sanctions at all, as the consequences are significant, while US-Russian trade relations, for example, are negligible.

The fact that Germany under Chancellor Merkel has emerged as the key player in negotiating with Putin and has imposed sanctions (although initially as a mere diplomatic sign, which is powerful and which creates “meaningful pain” in Russia) is evidence that even the pragmatic and reserved Chancellor Merkel has come to a point where enough is enough. This quiet figure has taken on the mantle of statecraft from earlier times and must resist the alteration of the European peaceful order that forms the basis of German national existence of security, peace, and prosperity in a united Europe in a time of peace.

Within domestic politics, Germany’s Russia policy boasts two core groups: (1) the human rights and values faction, representing, for example, the Green Party in the Bundestag; and (2) the members of parliament of the CDU fraction, while the realist, interest-led, economy-focused group represents the majority of the SPD and, via the *Ostausschuss*, the majority of Germany’s economy.<sup>559</sup> However, it should be noted that the Green Party did accept Schroeder’s Russia policy while being in a coalition with the SPD between 1998 and 2005.<sup>560</sup> One year after the annexation of Crimea, it has become clear that Berlin has hit a dead-end in diplomatic relations in terms of *Ostpolitik*. The Kremlin seems convinced that the confrontational course towards the West is better for ensuring Putin’s dominant position in domestic Russia and enhances Russia’s international image as a great and strong power. Cooperation and all the glory of *Wandel durch Annaehrung* seems to have fallen from grace, and the prospects for a return to the status quo ante bellum are dim in June 2015. To sum up, in regards of the main challenge of Germany’s traditional *Ostpolitik*, it has to be acknowledged that “Germany’s idealistic Russia policy is simply not compatible with Putin’s realpolitik” because the strategic environment has changed; thus, the makers of European and German policy are required to try new approaches.<sup>561</sup> This is a diplomatic revolution that goes against the grain of

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<sup>559</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 36.

<sup>560</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>561</sup>Meister, “Reframing Germany’s Russia Policy,” 4; Kundnani, “Ostpolitik Illusion,” 1.

much that has been central to German statecraft, and is thus an especially painful and difficult process.

As discussed in Chapter III on the essentials of foreign policy, change can occur on four different levels. Accepting the fact that Germany under Merkel has indeed changed its approach towards Russia in the wake of the annexation of Crimea and the continuing violence, it can be doubted that this change resembles just another routine, partial adjustment, which would widen the scope. Such an explanation could be attributed to the post-Georgian War reaction after 2008, which returned rather fast to normalcy. The current change is more a program change ignited by external shock of a fundamental kind. It is an earthquake to rattle the already shaken edifice of Europe since the world economic crisis. Program change, according to Herman, is inherently a qualitative change involving new instruments, such as sanctions to pursue an objective. Consequently, “what is done and how it is done changes, but the purpose for which it is done remain unchanged.”<sup>562</sup> The longstanding continuity in German-Russian relations has been interrupted by discontinuity in international and domestic politics, but also in the public perception of power and the European order. As Stent, Pond, and others have argued regarding the brutality of the aircraft shoot down, the so-called MH17 tragedy acted as a catalyst for the negative perception of the Ukraine crisis. After all, a plane full of Dutch holiday-seekers brutally blasted from the sky in a war zone constitutes a sign akin to the Serbian irredentist mortar shells hitting the marketplace in Sarajevo in the early 1990s. Or it signifies something far worse: the return of great power conflict to the core of Europe as the most severe test of *Ostpolitik* since the classic crises of the Cold War. The subsequent public outrage in Europe and the German debate on how to deal with the crisis transformed the perception of the German public, leading to a 13 percent increase to 61 percent in support of a tough stance towards Russia.<sup>563</sup>

The root cause of the change can be found in the bold violation of international law: the trespass of the core functioning principles of Germany’s international relations

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<sup>562</sup>Hermann, “Changing Course,” 5.

<sup>563</sup>Elizabeth Pond and Hans Kundnani, “Germany’s Real Role in the Ukraine Crisis,” *Foreign Affairs*, March /April 2015, 2, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/eastern-europe-caucasus/germany-s-real-role-ukraine-crisis>.



and the questioning of the security order of post-Cold War Europe as a whole leading to a moral dilemma in the *Bundeskanzleramt*. For Putin, the hybrid or irregular warfare annexation of Crimea sent a clear message to the Russian population, but also to the international community, when he showed everyone that Russia is back as a great power on the international stage. Such a *coup de main* is how only a great power “can get away with such boldness.”<sup>564</sup> As the current situation in Eastern Europe is unlikely to be a temporary phenomenon, Germany cannot comfortably just revert to old approaches in the school of Egon Bahr and his many, many acolytes. Once more, Germany, and this time, the most powerful Germany that has existed in a long time, both politically and morally, is once again the nation caught in between—mediating between the West and Russia and torn between values and interests. However, in a more realistic approach, Germany is embedded in its western integration, which is being put to an unexpected and bloody test.

## **B. AN END TO “RUSSIA FIRSTER”?**

The *Russlandversteher* have voiced critique over the approach to Russia, and in the case of Matthias Platzeck has even called for acceptance of the annexation of Crimea in order to appease Moscow and return to normalization. In addition, in December 2014, an open letter, initiated by the former security policy advisor of Chancellor Kohl, Horst Teltschik was widely published in Germany under the title “Again War in Europe? Not in Our Name!” and signed by sixty prominent Germans, among them former President Roman Herzog and former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. The open letter called for a *leitmotif*, which was based on Germany’s *Ostpolitik*: “integrate instead of exclude shall be the leitmotif of German politicians.”<sup>565</sup> The appeal expressed not only the hopes of German businesses to return to normalcy in their relations to Russia as soon as possible (the *Ostausschuss* was found in a prominent role within the open letter), but also the general perception of Germany as a civil power (unlike its war-torn neighbors and allies),

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<sup>564</sup>Anna Geifmann and Yuri Teper, “Russia’s New National Identity under Putin’s Regime,” BESA Center Perspectives paper no. 279, December 29, 2014, 3, <http://besacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Geifman-Anna-and-Teper-Uri-Russias-New-National-Identity-under-Putins-Regime-PP279-Dec.-29-2014.pdf>.

<sup>565</sup>“Wieder Krieg in Europa? Nicht in unserem Namen!” [Again war in Europe? Not in our name], *Zeit Online*, December 5, 2014, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/2014-12/aufruf-russland-dialog>.

clinging to the reluctance of taking on greater responsibility and the foreign policy paradigm expressed in “German foreign policy is peace policy.”<sup>566</sup> It also united the diverse variations of *Russlandversteher* in Germany for a moment, as generally the groups are from a broad spectrum, reaching from political parties at the extreme right, such as the newly emerged right-wing populist party *Alternative fuer Deutschland* (Alternative Party for Germany), or from the extreme left, centering around the communist platform within the party *Die Linke*, the successor of the East German communist SED, which also includes economic-driven lobbyists, as well as people that are anti-American; thus, they tend to see Russia as a more suitable partner.<sup>567</sup> The percentage of Germans who are openly anti-American has probably grown since 9/11, and especially since Edward Snowden aspired to be a kind of digital Martin Luther, who will free Germany and all others from the vice grip of a digital hierarchy of all horizon secret police intruders with his WikiLeaks theses hammered on the global commons.

However, Adomeit has clarified the fact that the prominently voiced *Russlandversteher* in the German public and its media do not equal the mainstream of German public opinion, as the “overwhelming majority of German academic specialists on Russia”<sup>568</sup> do not share these analyses. Therefore, one must differentiate between the domestic politics of a German approach to Russia, far from being simply a Russia Firster approach, while recognizing that Germany has more to lose if relations with Russia are in chaos. This helps to make sense of the publicly voiced praise of Russia in light of the ever-growing significance of the NSA scandal in the public. Perceptions of the Russia Firster approach need to take into account the high proportion of trade interdependency between Germany and Russia, as compared to the United States, where hardly any real trade relations with Russia exist. Thus, sanctions have tougher consequences for Germany and its economy with the national focus on exports amid globalization and a growing Eurasian focus. In this regard, Germany has pursued an economically driven, interest-led *Realpolitik* in its approach to Russia and found itself surprised to see that the

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<sup>566</sup>Federal Foreign Office, “Germany’s foreign policy parameters.”

<sup>567</sup>Adomeit, “German-Russian Relations,” 19.

<sup>568</sup>Ibid., 20.

values Germany represents were left behind in that “the hope[s] of German firms that they would modernize Russia and bring in a *Rechtsstaat*—a state under the rule of law, have so far been illusory.”<sup>569</sup> Thus, stereotyping all of Germany as *Russlandversteher* clearly misjudges its realistic understanding of the world at the political, decision-making level.

The public perception of Russia has also experienced significant change, especially after the MH17 disaster in July 2014, when the public opinion towards Russia plunged severely. In August 2014, only 15 percent of the Germans saw in Russia a trustworthy partner, having decreased steadily from nearly 40 percent in December 2010.<sup>570</sup> Due to the fact that the deep-rooted empathy towards Russia will continue in some parts of the German public, primarily in the east, and due to its economy (based on centuries of common European and Eurasian history), the Russia Firster will surely endure and simply be a part of the German body politic. But because the majority of Germans have seen the “real face of the Russian bear,” the *Russlandversteher* and the promoters of a Russia First will be less stentorian as long as Russia is reluctant to cooperate with the West within the rule of international law.

### C. DIPLOMACY, SECURITY, AND VALUES

Because foreign policy is chiefly a state activity undertaken to realize the state’s interests concerning its power, economy, culture, and above all, its security vis-à-vis its international partners and neighbors, one can suggest that German foreign policy has been successful in pursuing Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* from 1969 until 1990. Such policy has assured the nation’s security based on a balanced approach between *Westbindung*, while it maintained a policy of dialogue, and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union up until 1990 when the aim had been the reunification. Such policy changed in the post-Cold War *Ostpolitik* after Germany had regained its full sovereignty and power in economic terms, it exerted its *Ostpolitik* as a geo-economic power focusing on interests, while hoping that the values would come along as the interests are pursued. This goal turned out to be an

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<sup>569</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 133.

<sup>570</sup>Infratest Dimap, “ARD DeutschlandTREND.”

illusion. Germany, intertwined with a political and economic interdependent global system, has well understood that maintaining its strength requires first to help itself by fostering its own interests. Further, Germany builds a power base from which it can shape the international order according to German values. However, that might require weighing political implications against decisions that potentially cause negative impacts on its power base—a constant balancing of interests versus values. As the world has become more violent and political culture eschews violence for classic liberal, or, as it is called “civil” values, such policies encounter a growing headwind.

The post-Cold War order that emerged in Europe has been shaped significantly by a united, peaceful, and secure Germany, which, over the last twenty-five years, developed an increasingly considerable weight in foreign policy on its path to normalcy in a globalizing world economy and world society. However, with normalization comes responsibility for power, peace, and security, not simply prosperity in the balance of trade. With waxing chaos in the Middle East, with the United States shrinking under the weight of its security burdens and domestic challenges, and with the truths of geopolitics at hand, Germany’s politicians have called for Germany and Europe to shoulder its burdens at the Munich Security Conference in 2014, a call reiterated by Germany’s defense minister in 2015 when she referred to *leadership from the centre*, a phrase that means more in German than it does in English, where it falls rather flat. But the question remains urgent of which instruments to use. Armed forces in the classical manner are the last resort, and in German foreign policy is considered a source of domestic political pain for all that must touch such weapons. For the last seventy years, Germany reluctantly armed itself within the Atlantic alliance, where the decisive weapons lay in U.S. hands. It was happy to more or less disarm in 1990 with unity. Germany has slowly and haltingly participated in military operations of any kind since 1994.<sup>571</sup> If it comes to hard power, as the Crimean case has shown with signal brutality, Germany still plays the moral card that wars are always a disaster. Savants referred to what is simply called the ‘historical heritage’, which seems to be a code word for “Stalingrad” and “Auschwitz” and the impossibility of power in anything other than postmodern categories, that is, post-heroic

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<sup>571</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 135.

ideals. Although active military options are not on the table concerning the Ukraine crisis in the narrow sense, Germany needs to take into account the geopolitical and alliance cohesion consequences of Russia's actions. Putin has worked a miracle as concerns classic NATO security goals under Article 3 of mutual aid and self-help. He has enabled what Europe as a whole was not capable of doing: increasing defense spending in European countries and re-concentrating on NATO's core task of collective defense under Article 5.<sup>572</sup>

Since the chancellor ruled out military options, "Germany confronts a Russian use of military power with only economic tools with which to respond."<sup>573</sup> Therefore, it is currently evident that Germany's Russia policy—the long-time, well-working *Ostpolitik* in the form of change through trade—is in shambles. These shambles extend to European and U.S. policies as well. Despite the recent change of policy in Germany, with a surprisingly tough tone and direct language, the West has to agree on new ways to approach Russia in view of the crisis. So far, Merkel has retained the unifying momentum for her grand coalition, but also for the European Union, which is on shaky grounds regarding the Greek financial crisis. When Merkel spoke with President Putin in Moscow on May 10, 2015, one day after the biggest military parade on the Red Square in Moscow, she was describing German-Russian relations and acknowledged that the cooperation has been severely compromised "by the criminal and unlawful annexation of Crimea and the military hostilities in eastern Ukraine . . . [Germany sees] these acts as a violation of the very foundations on which our common European peace order is built."<sup>574</sup> Although Merkel called for a diplomatic solution and repeated that the dialogue with Russia needs to continue, Germany has so far maintained its tough stance towards Russia, even though a high cost has been inflicted on the economy.

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<sup>572</sup>Adrian Croft, "Ukraine crisis forces European defense spending rethink," Reuters, 27 August 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/27/us-nato-summit-spending-idUSKBN0GR1EB20140827>.

<sup>573</sup>Szabo, *Germany, Russia*, 130.

<sup>574</sup>Angela Merkel, "Pressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel und Staatspräsident Putin am 10. Mai 2015 in Moskau, im Wortlaut," [Press conference of Chancellor Merkel and President Putin on 10 May in Moscow, in exact wording], *Die Bundeskanzlerin*, [The Chancellor], 10 May 2015, accessed 12 May 2015 <http://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2015/05/2015-05-10-pk-merkel-putin.html>.

This raises the question of what to do with the tougher sanctions in July 2015, when the sanctions have to be reviewed? The German *Ostausschuss* will make sure that the Merkel administration is well aware of the economic costs for Germany, while at the same time the SPD with Sigmar Gabriel tries to distinguish itself from the CDU, and the NSA scandal is increasingly becoming a domestic problem. In short, all politics is local. Insofar as foreign policy has an internal and an external factor, the latter has been widely described, and the internal factor needs to be monitored because a Germany that is in an election campaign mood might discuss any additional changes to the Ukraine crisis in a different way than it has so far.

To conclude on the question of whether the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 has changed Germany's foreign policy regarding Russia, Germany's answer is a new tone in foreign policy, use of tougher instruments, and the fact that Germany stands united in confronting Russia—united with Europe, but more important for Germany, united within the grand coalition and the public will. Putin miscalculated if he thought that Germany under Merkel would collapse quickly and would not endure standing up to the Kremlin; however, Germany and the West wrongly assumed that Putin would bend quickly before the sanctions, which he did not most probably will not anytime soon. Thus, Merkel did not only stand up to Putin's actions in Ukraine, but also re-prioritized strategic objectives of the European security order over economic objectives.<sup>575</sup> For Germany, this means that the new strategic security environment with a new political map of Europe requires a new German power—a Germany willing and able to safeguard the European security order.

Oriented towards the status-quo, Russia feared losing Ukraine from its sphere of influence, something Putin was not ready to accept. The possible reach of the EU into Ukraine or, on the contrary, the affiliation of Ukraine with the EU, would have been an either-or choice in the future and Ukraine would get closer to “big brother” Russia or take its chances with the EU. Mankoff argues that “a Russia that feels itself backed into a corner and in need of lashing out isolates itself (as during the war in Georgia).”<sup>576</sup> The

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<sup>575</sup>Kundnani, *Paradox of German Power*, 114.

<sup>576</sup>Mankoff, “Russian Foreign Policy,” 276.

isolation is hardly in Russia's interest because it is in desperate need of foreign investment and modernization in order to enhance its economy, especially in light of volatile oil prices. While Russians were mostly interested in the technological transfer, though not in societal change and democratic values, the idea of cooperation through trade ran aground, especially because losing a tight grip on society would negatively affect the Kremlin's authoritarian grip to rule the country and stay in power. Thus, Putin challenged the post-Cold War security order, and in this regard, the fundamental change in German foreign policy is not all about Ukraine. But the root causes are foremost about the validity of the European security order based on the principles of rule of law and the notion of Westphalian peace therefore the inviolability of national borders and sovereignty.

The international perception of German foreign policy as a Russian Firster approach falls short of recognizing the overall context in which Germany conducts its Russia policy. Based on the traditional *Ostpolitik*, Germany had to balance between East and West in order to achieve its objective of peaceful reunification, while later, economic interrelations were the main drivers of post-1990 engagement with Russia and former Soviet republics. However, that interest-led *Realpolitik* has shown its limitations. Thus, the decision to change the program, as undertaken by Angela Merkel and Frank-Walter Steinmeier, clearly showed that German foreign policy is not about Russia Firsters but all about the peaceful and prosperous European security order.

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## VI. RETAINING CREDIBILITY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR GERMANY'S FOREIGN POLICY

The fundamental change of Germany's approach to Russia is inevitable if German foreign policy is to remain credible and reliable in the eyes of its partners. However, the challenge for Berlin is to find the right balance in its approach to Moscow because it is also inevitable that it will re-engage with Russia in the future. Trenin, talking about the German balancing act, put it quite well when he pointed out that "a radical, values-first strategy is emotionally satisfying and may be politically useful in the short term, but otherwise it is usually fruitless. By contrast, a wholly unprincipled value-less approach leads to the moral abyss. Politics, including international politics, has always been the art of the possible."<sup>577</sup> Therefore, Foreign Minister Steinmeier clarified in spring 2015 that Germany could "not act as if nothing has happened," as Germany continued to take the lead role in engaging with Russia.

Far from maintaining a Russian Firster approach, it is necessary that Germany enhance understanding of Russia actions because the West is increasingly "perceived in Russia as a power that wants to spread its values into the Russian world, thus threatening to change Russia's unique and increasingly conservative national identity."<sup>578</sup> In this regard, the lack of expertise on Russia within the German foreign policy community becomes an issue. Multiple scholars argue that insufficient research capabilities and expertise threaten to constitute a structural change, which could negatively influence future German administrations.<sup>579</sup> In the context of writing the new Defense White Book in Germany, the ministry of defense has already decided to spend several million euros to set up a new institute to study the post-Soviet states.<sup>580</sup> For Germany, the relevance of Russia and the post-Soviet region is of utmost importance in understanding Russia.

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<sup>577</sup>Trenin, "New Russia Policy for Germany," 4.

<sup>578</sup>Zevelev, "Russian World Boundaries," 6.

<sup>579</sup>Meister, "Germany's Russia Policy under Angela Merkel," 41.

<sup>580</sup>Madeline Chambers, "Germany Says New Security Strategy Will Respond to Russia," *Reuters*, February 17, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/17/us-germany-security-idUSKBN0LL1BK20150217>.

Knowledge and expertise are necessary to avoid any misunderstandings; thus, this should be a reciprocal approach.

Challenging the traditional Westphalian system, the advent of the Ukraine crisis and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 poses a test of Germany's foreign policy—its *Ostpolitik*—that does not allow any of the luxuries of choice that might have been said to exist to opt out and or to shift burdens, as happened in the period from 1990 to 2011. Germany cannot outsource these security policy decisions because it needs to take a clear stance towards Russia. The Baltic States and Poland will expect at least a clear sign of reassurance from Germany. With Russia testing the limits of contemporary European order or challenging them by repetitive action, it must be assumed that other regions (e.g., Georgia, Crimea, eastern Ukraine) might follow if the West's reactions are not able to bring about change. For example, the Moldovian region of Transnistria was among the regions named in this regard. Expectations regarding Germany are high because not only do the Eastern neighbors look to Berlin. Also the western neighbors look upon Germany,, when former French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hubert Védrine in 2012 asked why Germany would not accept to take over more responsibilities in other areas, he made clear that in his perspective, “Germany could be a real power: peaceful, but not pacifistic, in short: useful.”<sup>581</sup>

Germany has been more than useful; it has continuously shown its leadership in the crisis, and no other political leader has spoken to President Putin more often and more critically than Chancellor Merkel since the beginning of 2014. Even though Crimea is still Russian and eastern Ukraine is still a pro-Russian rebel area backed by Russia, the sanctions regime helped significantly to reduce violence, for the moment. If the Western sanctions regime towards Russia will hold and Russia's economic decline will continue, then the fear of Russia turning east to China becomes a real alternative from the Russian side.<sup>582</sup> Another risk is the current crisis in Europe, with Greece and Cyprus being reluctant to impose new sanctions or to renew existing sanctions. Together with the increasing Russo-Turkish relations, Germany risks a further division in the EU if Russia

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<sup>581</sup>Schoellgen, *Deutsche Aussenpolitik von 1945*, 307.

<sup>582</sup>Wipperfuerth, *Russlands Aussenpolitik*, 143.

manages to come around the southern flank. Thus, as Kuehn stresses, “Europe needs a real restart.” Germany, with its power, geographical position, and historic legacy, is obliged to take a leading role in shaping Europe’s future and ensuring continuity in solidarity, and by so doing reframe the approach to Russia. Currently, Russia shows no sign of backing off from its chosen path, so the sanctions will remain an instrument in the Western approach to Russia, and the redefinition of Europe’s and Germany’s approach to Russia is necessary. The current German approach, in which Merkel takes a tougher stance towards Russia, employs sanctions that are hurting German business interests, but the constant line of communication she maintains with the Kremlin could be seen as a continuous evolution of traditional *Ostpolitik*. But by using the stick and not only the carrot, Berlin accepts the responsibility in international affairs, and in this regard changed its policy over the annexation of Crimea and continuous violence in eastern Ukraine.

The Ukraine crisis of 2014 (sparked by Putin’s aggressive reaction to the pro-Western Euromaidan protests in Kiev and subsequently the Russian takeover of Crimea for fear that the region might break away from Russia’s sphere of influence and its privileged interests) has altered the European security order. In light of constant Russian military snap exercises and enhanced NATO exercises, the risk for accidental war has not been higher since 1983, when perceptions arose that the Soviet Union mistook the NATO exercise Able Archer as preparations for a real nuclear war. Therefore, Germany is obliged to use its unique position, not only to avoid accidental war, but more importantly to resolve the crisis between Russia and the West. In 2016, Germany will become the chair of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and could use that position to re-engage with Moscow and to foster re-establishment of a European security order with a firm transatlantic partnership, as there is no alternative to cooperation with Russia. Germany’s *Ostpolitik* will continue; however, the fundamental program change will ensure that Germany can take over the responsibility, as it is rightly expected to do.

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